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LORD ROSEBERY

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Lord Rosebery
about 1892

LORD ROSEBERY

By

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE, K.G.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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CHAPTER XII

HOME AND FOREIGN POLITICS : VISIT TO VARZIN :
LORD HARTINGTON : LADY ROSEBERY'S ILLNESS
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THE year 1890, destined to close in black gloom, opened with the customary prospect of congenial labours and sufficient diversion. The County Council reassembled early in January, and Rosebery's work in it has been described above. The early spring was chiefly spent at the Durdans.

February 10th.—"The Gladstones and Mrs. Drew, Granville, Spencer and E. Hamilton dined. Mr. G. like a boy, and a very pleasant dinner. The discussion on the Queen's Speech not oppressive. Granville told me that old Lady Jersey (in this house)¹ always expected presents on her birthday. Alvanley was one of the first to arrive and always took some little object out of the drawing-room which he presented to her with an exquisite speech, in her boudoir."

In the previous year there had been some coolness between the Prince of Wales and Rosebery, and the Prince had contemplated a visit elsewhere than at Dalmeny for the opening of the Forth Bridge. This would have been a marked rebuff. But in January H.R.H. relented, and he stayed a night at Dalmeny for the ceremony.

March 4th.—"Opening of the Forth Bridge : a gale from the west. I crossed the bridge on the outside of the railway carriage, and was nearly blown away. . . . The Prince very civil and confidential—hoped he might consider me a friend. . . . Showed me a very disparaging letter from the Empress Frederick about her son."

Late in July the Roseberys left for Geneva, for a

¹ 38 Berkeley Square.

short fortnight's stay. There he enjoyed following up the memories of Voltaire and of Rousseau, and the treasures of the Musée d'Antiquités. Mr. Barton, the British Consul, of the Bordeaux branch of his Irish family, Mrs. Barton, and her mother, Lady Emily Peel, were at their hospitable villa, and were the kindest of guides in many expeditions. One was to Baron Adolphe Rothschild's villa at Pregny, lunching at Bellevue, the "little house by the water, with a charming dining-room with four Tiepolos in it. I have not liked a room so much for some time." But, not for the first time, he was more completely intoxicated by glimpses of the pageant of nature than by any display of luxurious art. Witness his Journal :

July 29th.—"The evening sultry as hell. A cloud overhanging, full of wrath and portent, the lightnings forked and sheeted playing on the opposite mountains, as if Beelzebub were giving a ball on the summit. One top was kindled with a dull lurid flame like a volcano, where I suppose the lightning had set the woods on fire. Below, the Lake, black and terrible as impending revolution."

And in a less terrific vein :

July 31st.—"A glorious night. Mont Blanc frozen clear, with one cold glittering star in chilly sympathy : then of a sudden a golden gleam, and in a moment the whole saffron moon, genial as a sun, filled and absorbed and warmed the heaven. For an instant it rested on the summit of Mont Blanc as though saluting it, and then rose on its own solitary imperial course. I could hardly go to bed."

Impressive, too, was the junction of the blue Rhône and "muddy democratic Arve."

After the return to England came the news of Cardinal Newman's end. A year before, Rosebery had been at Birmingham but had not been able to pay his respects at the Oratory, for the Cardinal was not visible.

August 13th.—"While at luncheon received telegram from Father Neville to say that if I wished to see Cardinal Newman's

remains I must come at once. So caught the 2.10 train. Arrived at the Oratory at 5. Met Father Neville who took me to the Church, then to the little sitting-room and tiny oratory, where he produced a good portrait of the Cardinal which the Cardinal had proposed to give me when he heard I had been disappointed of Millais's, and had been over-ruled, I suppose, very naturally: then to his admirably planned library. The sitting-room a mere cell filled with books.

"The Cardinal just like a saint's remains over a high altar, waxy, distant, emaciated, in a mitre, rich gloves where-on the ring (which I kissed), rich slippers. With the hat at the foot.

"And this was the end of the young Calvinist, the Oxford don, the austere Vicar of St. Mary's. It seemed as if a whole cycle of human thought and life were concentrated in that august repose. That was my overwhelming thought. Kindly light had led a guided Newman to this strange, brilliant, incomparable end.

"Seeing him on his right side in outline one saw only an enormous nose and chin almost meeting—a St. Dominic face. The left side was inconceivably sweet and soft, with that gentle corner of the mouth so greatly missed in the other view. The body, so frail and slight that it had ceased to be a body terrestrial."

Soon after this solemn pilgrimage Rosebery moved to Scotland. There was again grouse shooting at Invermark and at Tulchan, but it was a poor year, and by the end of the month he was established *en famille* at Dalmeny. September was amazing, as in the north it can be:

September 7th.—"I never remember such weather as the last two days in Scotland."

In home politics the Report of the Special Commission marked the dividing line between parties with brutal clearness. It has been noted how ingeniously the Government had striven to confuse the issues: the Pigott letters, which had been relied on to blow the Home Rule fabric into atoms, now that they were known to be forged, were treated as of minor importance.

In the House of Lords (March 21st) Lord Salisbury

proposed that the Commissioners' Report be adopted and that they be thanked for their just and impartial conduct. On the Liberal side all the heavy artillery was brought up. Lord Herschell, in a long and masterly speech, directly opposed the motion. It was his contention, and that of Lords Kimberley and Spencer who followed, that the whole business was in no sense judicial but a political manoeuvre directed against political enemies and carried out by political methods. When Rosebery's turn came, following Lord Derby, he developed this theme, and pointed out that all the speakers who supported Lord Salisbury had been ex-Liberals, not Conservatives. The objection to the Report was that it made no attempt to discriminate between moral crime and political offence. As to violent language, equally violent had been used by Ulster partisans, and Lord Wolseley had never contradicted the story that he had offered to organise the forces of disorder if a Home Rule Bill were passed. Lord Salisbury himself had sat approving speakers inciting to revolution in certain contingencies. But for the forged letters there would have been no Commission at all, and the language used by *The Times* was parallel to that used by the *Irish World*. No apology was offered to Parnell, who had been tried by a tribunal chosen by the Government, had been found innocent, with the net result that he was fined £40,000 of expenses. When Lord Salisbury embarked the country on a war with Afghanistan he had been arraigned for a gross political offence by many, including some eloquent voices now dumb and supporting his present policy. Suppose some forged document had also been produced? If it were found to be forged, the amplest reparation would have been offered, though the grave political offence would have been the same, as the speaker still considered. He concluded by an appeal to the Irish Peerage. They were standing on one side, the Irish people on the other :

“If there be one truth more strictly and universally

written than another by history, it is this : that an aristocracy divorced from a nation is a doomed aristocracy. I regret it with all my heart, but it is a truth written on the ruined Palaces of Venice and Versailles. . . . It is not a hundred years ago since we had your Charlemonts and Cloncurrys and FitzGeralds, Charlemonts who were not ashamed to lead the Irish Volunteers, Cloncurrys and FitzGeralds who were not ashamed to share the aspirations of Ireland, even to prison and the grave."

He read the list of Irish Peers who had signed the protest against the Union in 1800, including many of the greatest names in Ireland. And not only the Irish Peers, but Government and Parliament had lost the opportunity of presenting to a generous and high-spirited people a resolution of regret for the charges founded on fraud and forgery. The debate lasted till past midnight, and concluded without the farce of a division.

The Anglo-German Agreement, wide in scope and far-reaching in consequence, was the other Parliamentary subject that diverted Rosebery's energies from London administration. The cession of Heligoland, a small and loyal colony, close to our shores, as a consideration for the settlement of vexed questions thousands of miles away in Africa, excited some feeling.

Rosebery asked (June 30th) whether the wishes of the people had been consulted, and if those who objected to the transfer would be given the option of settling elsewhere. Lord Salisbury replied that they must wait till the Convention could be laid on the table, and when asked what were the means taken to ascertain the feelings of the people of Heligoland, announced that they were of a confidential character, and could not be discussed. "Confidential with the population?" asked Lord Granville.

The Bill came up for second reading (July 10th). It referred solely to Heligoland, but Lord Salisbury naturally made reference to the African negotiations

for which Parliamentary sanction was not formally needed. He dealt fully and fairly with the whole business, but could not say how the wishes of the inhabitants of the little island had been ascertained. He did not dispute that it might be of strategic value to Germany, though it was of none to us. Coming to Africa, we could not claim the right to lock up the whole of it. He elaborated a defence of Germany's claim to territory north of Lake Tanganyika, and to access to the River Zambesi in the south.

Rosebery could not refrain from reflecting what the reception of such an agreement would have been if Mr. Gladstone's Government had submitted it to the House, but he was determined not to cavil at it. The whole business was rather like the apportionment of the New World by Pope Alexander VI. He wished that some formal Conference or Congress could sanction such agreements on behalf of the communities of Europe at large. He did not press the value of Heligoland to us, but present Ministers in 1885 had scouted the notion of ceding it. The precise extent of the Sultanate of Zanzibar had been doubtful, and now the consent of France, one of the guaranteeing Powers, did not seem to have been secured. One thing was clear. Since the Liberal Government left office in 1886 the prestige and influence of the Sultan of Zanzibar had diminished. Now we were buying back a small part of what we had in 1886, and the protectorate of Zanzibar, by a cession of British territory, one of our few assets from the war with Napoleon. But of course there was no question of opposing the plan as a whole.

Outside Parliament Rosebery's oratorical engagements were limited by County Council work, but he attended the Co-operative Congress in Glasgow as its President. In a long inaugural address he disclaimed any special knowledge of the subject, wishing to speak as a learner. As a politician he was first interested in the moral effect of the movement on the State. Then, more technical, there were the soundness of its

economic basis and the possibilities of its extension in different directions. After dealing with the first two divisions of the subject, he observed, speaking as an ignorant outsider, that there were three directions in which advance might be made. The first was building societies, the inception of which could be claimed by the county of Clackmannan before they gained an impulse in America. The second was insurance. He did not believe that a system of national insurance, which was being tried in Germany, would apply here at all. It would be resented here as complicated and compulsory, but should succeed admirably by co-operative agency. These remarks were loudly applauded. In the third place, he believed that in spite of some well-known failures there was a great future for co-operative farming, not starting on an ambitious scale, but in imitation of some of the dairy-farms successfully run by companies.

At the conclusion he was presented with a writing-table of Co-operative manufacture, and, thanking for it, remarked that he was also wearing a pair of Co-operative trousers.

It happened that Rosebery and Herbert Bismarck were in frequent communication this year, and it is worth noting that in their correspondence there is not a word of Heligoland. It was sometimes suspected that Rosebery's admiration for the Chancellor and liking for his son might deflect his judgment in matters of foreign policy. But with him the Foreign Office came first, whichever party might be controlling it. The great event, of course, with the Bismarcks was the resignation (as the Emperor called it) or abrupt dismissal (as they called it) of the Chancellor. Rosebery wrote to Herbert Bismarck :

March 20th.—"I can hardly trust myself to write of this stupendous news. One paper (a French one, I think) describes best what I should say, 'When one has the luck to have a Bismarck, which does not happen to everyone, one does not throw him away.' Of course I do not presume to judge the

Emperor, but when I think of the weary and painful and unending toil and combination by which the fabric of your policy and the peace of Europe have been maintained, I envy his courage. . . . And now as to yourself. You speak of your political career as closed, but that is not so. I know it was always your wish that it should end with your father's, and that you should obtain an interval of rest and enjoyment. But your experience and ability must always be at the service of your country. The holiday will have one great advantage for you, you will know your real friends. You have been so near the seat of power that it has not been easy for you to find this out. And now I doubt not that many envious asses who fear to kick the old lion may vent their spleen on the young one. I see the beginning of this in the *Times* telegram of to-day. I only hope that I may have the opportunity of showing how truly, whether you are in or out of office, I am

“Your affectionate friend,

“AR.

“Pray salute your father and mother from me. I hope they will not dismiss hastily the idea of a little tour here. . . .”

The “little tour” Rosebery hoped would include a stay at the Durdans, which was to be lent to the distinguished travellers, or a visit to Dalmeny in the late summer. The Prince, however, could not give up his custom of visiting one of the German or Austrian watering-places. Rosebery bought the original of Tenniel's famous cartoon “Dropping the Pilot,” with the solemn form of the old statesman, in jacket and sea-boots, coming down the ship's side, watched by the smaller figure of his Sovereign, with the Imperial crown, leaning over the bulwarks. Rosebery sent an impression of this to Prince Bismarck, who expressed himself as deeply touched. Herbert Bismarck wrote that the Emperor had wished him to remain in office, but he had excused himself on the ground that his health had given way, and he could not adapt himself to a new Chancellor. He added: “The gentleman who is going to be my successor comes from the Grand Duchy of Baden, where he has formerly been a Public Prosecutor. His name is

Herr v. Marschall, and he has never been conversant with the a, b, c, of foreign affairs. I wish him good luck.”¹ Prince Bismarck’s comment on the whole affair was simple :

“ It is very strange, the Emperor names his best general a Chancellor, and his best Chancellor a field marshal.”

It ended by Mohammed going to the mountain, as the mountain could not be moved. Rosebery proceeded to Ostend (September 24th), where Herbert Bismarck met him. They glanced at the glories of Bruges, and passed on to Hamburg, where the principal glory was a restaurant, reputed to be the best in Germany. They passed through Berlin and Stettin on a day’s journey to Varzin.

Prince Bismarck met them on horseback, and drove with Rosebery in the victoria to the house. There was a family party, and a few neighbours dropped in. Each day Rosebery had a drive of two or three hours with his host. Prince Bismarck knew French and English well, so converse was easy. Herbert Bismarck was entirely fluent in English, and his letters to Rosebery are singularly free from errors. Rosebery himself was a competent French scholar both for speaking and writing, though he could not claim the mastery given by Lord Lansdowne’s French descent, or by Lord Granville’s youthful years passed in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. But he never learned any German, except for his few elementary lessons at Homburg, and he could not read the language. It is, perhaps, stranger that his adoration for Naples never impelled him to the study of Italian. It certainly was not from indolence, for he was always studying something. But though he retained rather more Greek and Latin than most public school boys who have not been classical specialists, it is probable that

¹ These rather acidulated good wishes were in a manner fulfilled many years later. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein was the most active agent in the subjection of Turkey to German Imperial ambitions.

he never had the facility in acquiring languages that sometimes adorns powerful intellects, like Gladstone's, but may equally accompany others the opposite of powerful.

From Varzin Rosebery and Herbert Bismarck made an expedition to Danzig, Marienburg, the huge palace of the Teutonic Knights, and Königsberg. At this last the great hall in the Schloss was declared to be 137 yards long, which taxed Rosebery's credulity, though it was the longest room he had ever seen.

"At the end of it is a little horseshoe salon with its prim furniture and cracked harpsichord untouched. Here, separated from the palace and espionage by the vast hall, Queen Louise held her evening parties and planned German regeneration."

This must have been a pilgrimage of the heart, for the Prussian Queen was one of Rosebery's special heroines.

Rosebery reached London on October 5th, and went straight on to Scotland. He found his wife in bed with an attack of low fever, but not seriously unwell. So on the next day he kept his engagement to address the Glasgow Trades House annual dinner. He replied for the House of Lords, in the vein of pleasant banter which that toast used to encourage in great industrial centres. But he was serious in pointing to the dangers—the possible claim of the House to equality with the House of Commons, and the fact that men might become members of it against their will. He dreaded, too, lest the reform of the House might be undertaken not at a moment of political apathy, but of political paroxysm.

The next day he returned home, and the consulting doctors declared Hannah Rosebery's illness to be typhoid fever—as it was then always called. But there was no immediate alarm, and her husband returned the next day to Glasgow to receive the freedom of the city. The doctors, as he told his friends after the ceremony, had been anxious that the patient should

not be alarmed by the abandonment of an engagement by which both of them had set such store.

When receiving the freedom he was able, from his double experience, happily to express his belief that in the practical work done in municipal life a man gets a quicker return than from work done in Parliament.

It had been arranged that Mr. Gladstone would come to Dalmeny on October 20th, for the toil of four large meetings, and a series of drives through his constituency, varied with short speeches, on the days of relaxation. Lord Rosebery had to write his bitter disappointment at the loss of the visit; he had looked forward to this campaign with pride and pleasure.

At first Lady Rosebery's malady pursued its ordinary course, with high fever but strength well maintained. The children went, two at first to Dr. Donaldson's hospitable roof at St. Andrews, two to the castle close by. Lady Leconfield was her brother's support through the phases of alternating confidence and terror, which reached a climax on October 25th, when the doctors thought the end was near. The patient faced it calmly, and the two were together all day, talking of many things. She sent a message to a London friend whose illness was declared to be the same as hers. The next day she rallied, the symptoms that had alarmed the physicians proving to be salutary, and she seemed to be marvellously better. Her illness had moved many to sympathy, even outside her large circle of acquaintance—within it there was affectionate anxiety. Cecil Spring-Rice had been one of Rosebery's official private secretaries at the Foreign Office. He was the reverse of sentimental, but a staunch friend. He wrote to Ronald Ferguson on October 27th, "I do hope Lady Rosebery's illness is taking a good turn. I don't know any one who deserves so well of fate as she does."¹

The first fortnight of November found the doctors well satisfied, though recovery was not in sight.

¹ *Letters and Friendships*, vol. i, p. 109.

Rosebery was able to wear a brave face, as this letter shows :

DALMENY PARK, EDINBURGH, *November 6th, 1890.*

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"YOUR unexpected letter this morning gave me the greatest pleasure. I fully appreciate what you say about Hannah's illness being so near the heart of things during the late campaign ; and if I could have avoided sending that telegram on that initial Saturday how gladly would I have done so. After Hannah, I thought most of you and the strain of speaking with so cruel a drain of sympathy.

"As to the campaign itself, of the speeches and the effect produced I hear nothing but good. I reserve the perusal of Hartington for a rainy day—a rainier even than to-day : in fact indefinitely. I should like to have seen you at the Glen, where you must have had a time only less agitating than the baronet's. I hear Margot put you through a most searching cross-examination, and I am sure that your faculty of admiration was not suffered to rest. But I regard the Glen as the most perfect of all modern country houses, architecturally speaking.

"I have been printing an old list of the Jacobites involved in the 1745 affair, and giving it to the Scottish Historical Society (of which you should be a member). A particularly choice copy was being prepared for you, when it was discovered that the index was imperfect—the pivot of the whole thing. So now I wail among my broken potsherds ! And now for the bouquet—Hannah's progress is absolutely uninterrupted.

"Yr. affly.,
"AR."

And the ill wind blew away one painful misunderstanding. The intimacy of Rosebery and Hartington had been based on community of many friendships and many tastes. In political warfare Hartington's broadsword cut deep and true ; his admiration for the wrist play of Rosebery's rapier was unbounded. His mind moved surely but not fast ; and, as was shown in the fiscal controversy thirteen years later, he did not always anticipate the effect that his own action would produce on others. He now wrote to his friend a

letter of sympathy with his trouble and of inquiry about the cooling off of their personal relations. When they had last met on the neutral territory of Sandringham Hartington said to a fellow-guest, "I think Rosebery really hates me," which was the opposite of true; but this letter shows how deeply the younger friend had been hurt. An easy-going man might have let the occasion pass with a shrug. Rosebery never shrugged his shoulders, and he took it seriously, as he did everything of which he thought at all.

Private.

DALMENY PARK, November 7th, 1890.

"MY DEAR HARTINGTON,

"Thanks for your letter. I have no difficulty in giving you the explanation you ask for in terms so kind.

"It never occurred to me that a difference of opinion as to the proper course to pursue with regard to Ireland in 1886 could affect our friendship in the slightest degree. Nor did it, so far as I know.

"But in 1887 I was asked to stand for the rectorship of Glasgow. I do not like rectorships as they entail rectorial addresses. But when I saw that you and the other Unionist leaders warmly approved the idea of such a candidature, but more especially you, I thought it my duty not to avoid the opportunity of re-uniting the Liberal party even in so small a matter. And so I stood. But within a day or two of the election you published another letter urging your followers to vote against me. I offered to bet 100 to 1 that that letter was not genuine. But it was. It was not for me to judge whether it was fair or not. I could only be clear of one thing—that it was not the act of a friend. And as a friend—much against my will—I ceased to regard you.

"In spite of the letter I was elected, but by the form of election the ultimate decision rested with the chancellor—one of your principal adherents. He gave his vote to my opponent; although he was in a minority, and although he was that Lord Lytton who had been most reprobated by every branch of the Liberal party. But on that I lay no stress, nor do I wish to hold you in any degree responsible. I cared nothing for the election, and after your second letter I hated it: for the iron of that transaction entered into my soul.

"There ! you have brought this outpouring caused by the re-opening of an old wound, on yourself, or I would apologise for the length of this letter.

"Believe me,

"Very sincerely,

"AR."

Evidently Hartington, knowing that the contest for the rectorship was political, treated his own intervention as that of a political leader. Personal considerations did not arise, any more than they would in a debate in Parliament. The Chancellor, Lord Stair, doubtless thought the same. He was an old family friend of Rosebery's, but he was a very strong Unionist and felt entitled to give his casting vote to an ally. But there was this difference, which Hartington at the time did not apprehend, it seemed. The Chancellor had a duty to fulfil, and carried out the obligation conscientiously, possibly with reluctance. But Hartington had no more official or local connection with Glasgow than with the North Pole, so that his intervention seemed purely gratuitous. However, these candid explanations cleared the air and the close friendship was renewed in full vigour.

The first half of November seemed a little brighter. One or two intimate friends came, and Herbert Bismarck made a short stay. The bulletins became more satisfactory, but Rosebery could not feel greatly relieved. He wrote to Mr. Gladstone on the 17th :

"My invalid progresses slowly if indeed at all. To my mind she has not done well for some days, but the pundits continue to issue reassuring bulletins, more or less, so that I suppose I ought to be reassured. It cannot be far from the fiftieth day of fever, and how the human frame resists such a strain is more than I can understand."

On the very next day the brave resistance failed. I cannot help interposing a vivid personal recollection. I had been going to Dalmeny on October 18th for a quiet Sunday, to remain on through Mr. Glad-

stone's campaign, which was to begin after his arrival on Monday. Now, exactly a month later, I was to spend a few days, quiet in a different way, but helping, as I hoped, to divert my kind friend's thoughts into other channels while the beloved patient's slow recovery went on. On arriving at the station I was given an agonized note telling me that she was in a most critical state, and I went on south in deep sorrow. There was indeed a bare twenty-four hours of real anxiety before the end came.

The broken emotions of the next few days, spent with the grieving children, cannot be detailed here. It was settled that the funeral should be in the Jewish cemetery at Willesden, for Hannah Rosebery remained a loyal daughter of her ancient faith. The ceremony was on November 25th, when all the Rothschilds and most of Rosebery's colleagues of the Cabinet and of the County Council attended. At a Jewish funeral only men are present. Sir Henry Ponsonby, who was there on behalf of the Queen, wrote her a full account of the grave simple service and of Rosebery's self-control: "He wishes to show in public that he is able to put aside his sorrow, but in private he breaks down." The Queen's motherly solicitude was offered to any troubled heart, but specially to one who, like Rosebery, looked up to her with knightly devotion. She had thoroughly liked Lady Rosebery, so could write with comprehending sympathy. His acknowledgment of her letter tells the story of the thoughts that crowded on his mind at this supreme moment.

MENTMORE, *November 28th, 1890.*

"MADAM,

"I have I confess found the greatest difficulty in addressing myself to the duty of acknowledging Your Majesty's most gracious letter. Five or six times have I begun and laid down the pen. But Your Majesty's indulgence, the fruit I fear of sad experience, has deigned to allow me a pause. I find however that delay is fatal in this case, and that the lapse of time only makes it more difficult to write. I dearly

loved my wife, and our home was happiness itself : but I only now know what I have lost, and each new day represents a new desolation.

"I need not speak of her illness, for Your Majesty was better informed of its various stages than I was. The only circumstance of interest that I can supply is this : that on October 25, when she was given over she knew of her danger and was then able with calm courage to have a long conversation with me, as it were in the hand and presence of death, and which was, so to speak, her dying message. Afterwards her recovery was so rapid that we dismissed the thought of danger, and for the last ten days she was delirious, so that that last solemn talk is a great comfort. On me, and I think on my sister, the end came as a surprise, for the recuperative power had been unfailing : and we were perhaps dazed with the length and alternations of the illness, as the day of her death was the fiftieth of her fever.

"I very humbly assure Your Majesty that Your Majesty's constant signs of sympathy were of priceless value to my patient, who ever cherished an ardent affection for Your Majesty ; and who, on her bed of intolerable discomfort (rather than pain) was inexpressibly solaced by Your Majesty's tender solicitude. It is impossible to over-estimate the pleasure, in sickness or in health, that Your Majesty's mark of kindness gave to my wife.

"To turn to another source of strength and comfort I would venture to say that what my sister has been to both of us in this long agony, God only knows.

"There is, however, one incident of this tragedy only less painful than the actual loss ; which is that at the moment of death the difference of creed makes itself felt, and another religion steps in to claim the corpse. It was inevitable, and I do not complain : and my wife's family have been more than kind. But none the less is it exquisitely painful.

"Your Majesty has passed but too often through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and will understand me when I say that there seem to me only two consolations. The one that the Almighty and All Good has certainly ordained all for the best. And the other that love, such as my wife's, cannot perish ; that it is with me as much as my skin or the air I breathe ; and that so it must be to the end. Great love I firmly believe never dies or runs dry, but is part of the poor heritage of mankind.

"It is also a melancholy pleasure to witness the universal

feeling for her and the great measure of affection which she had almost unconsciously accumulated all around her.

"But perhaps the nearest thought to a bereaved soul is contained in the lines Your Majesty wrote in my wife's album, and the lighting upon which has given me the desire to write to-night—

" ' I hold it true whate'er befall,
I feel it when I sorrow most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.'

"I humbly beg Your Majesty's pardon for allowing my pen to run on. For this once, however, I cannot but see in Your Majesty less my Sovereign than the wife who has known the same sorrow and deigns from the sad summit of her experience to associate herself with those that grieve below. And I am,

" Your Majesty's

" devoted Servant and subject,

" ROSEBERY.

"I would venture to beg that Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrice would be pleased to accept my thanks for her gracious sympathy."

What the memory of that long intimate talk in the midst of the illness meant to the bereaved husband is shown from a letter of the same time to Mrs. Drew :

"On October 25th we believed that she was dying and she knew of our belief. She bore herself with so beautiful and pathetic a calm that it remains with me as the most exquisite memory of my life. And so, when it came to the point, her noble nature had quenched the fear of death."

Just before Christmas the Queen again wrote, knowing from her own repeated experience how poignant to the stricken heart is the coming of that season of traditional joy. Rosebery replied in deepest gratitude, and continued :

"And there is so much sorrow now. Three of the friends who grieved with me have themselves passed away. The procession passes swiftly on from the seen to the unseen ;

and while we are still straining to catch the last glimpse of one we loved, another has gone : and we begin to feel that our hearts and our interests are not here, but in the great silence."

Thus closed a chapter of Rosebery's life—perhaps the best chapter, because, though the succeeding years brought him high honours, "great place," successes in oratory and in letters, and some friendships that grew in value, he remained a lonely man. To have complete, unquestioning confidence in anybody was his chiefest difficulty. He came near it with one or two of his friends ; but he only achieved it in perfection with her. She had seemed to be of sound constitution, with promise of a long life. Once or twice she suffered from fainting attacks, but they were not thought serious. But at the end of the year 1890 the London doctor who had treated her told Rosebery news that in a way brought some comfort, if comfort it could be called—that she had suffered from a fatal malady which must have carried her off within two years.

How real and deep his affection for her was the world outside did not realise. A great heiress always has to surmount the critics' doubts whether she herself, or her possessions, constitute the central fact of her marriage. But apart from this, Rosebery's manner to her in public was sometimes abrupt, and he now and then seemed impatient of her obvious devotion to himself. Obvious it was, as when, for instance, her wish to hear the epigram with which he was delighting one side of the table, made her ignore the existence of her neighbour at the other. But any such irritation sprang from the shy element in Rosebery ; and nobody who saw the two together at home, or in a small congenial party, could doubt the affection as well as the comprehension that united them. Nor could such a one fail to find what good company she was. She was also a writer of excellent letters, full of just the news and gossip that her correspondent would like to hear told.

The close of the year was spent at Mentmore, mostly in greyness and snow. It was a wrench to see even intimate friends. As he wrote to Reginald Brett (December 15th): "I should greatly like to see you, if anybody. But the fact is I am antigregarious just now, and perhaps morose." He read much, because he always read, and he was deep in the eighteenth century, because the *Life of Pitt* was in view. But he wrote to me that he could not find much solace in reading any poetry, even "In Memoriam."

Just at the same time died one of Rosebery's favourite companions, Harry Tyrwhitt. He was gaiety personified, and even when rapid consumption claimed him as its victim he remained imperturbable, humorous, and refusing to be an invalid, only talking of a troublesome cough. He was the most conspicuous of a light-hearted group that, in those eighties which the present generation believes were so solemn and decorous, turned night into day and yet by day were everywhere. Each of them might have said with the dying versifier :

"Life's opening chapter pleased me well,
Too hurriedly I turned the page :
I spoiled the volume : who can tell
What might have been my Lost Old Age ?"

Between Rosebery and public life the curtain remained drawn throughout the year 1891. He made no speeches either in the House or on the platform. But his political friends did not want to lose him, and Gladstone in particular kept him in strict view. In April he wrote to Rosebery for his opinion about the vacant Liberal leadership in the House of Lords, suggesting that it might remain vacant. Rosebery replied at once (April 12th), strongly objecting, on the grounds that without a chief the little party of thirty or forty would drop to pieces. They must have a rallying-point—a leader chosen by themselves, who would not necessarily be the principal figure in a new Government. Lord Granville's guidance had been

consummate, but an occasional division on a question of principle might have been a good thing.

"He did not like to reveal the nakedness of the land. But that nakedness is notorious, and there is a sense of notoriety and responsibility attaching to a vote in a small minority which is not so disagreeable, I suspect, as is generally supposed."

In reply to his chief's acquiescence he wrote again from Madrid (April 16th) :

"What has been done seems to me a very fair arrangement. There will be a head to the party or rump ; and Kimberley, who is an admirable debater and accustomed to the House of Lords, will, I have no doubt, keep the remnant together."

In the early summer he saw Mr. Gladstone twice in London, and Campbell-Bannerman once, but that was all. During his stay abroad he wrote to his chief from Gastein :

July 16th, 1891.

"1. I am entirely in agreement with you as to the paramount necessity of holding aloof from the Triple Alliance, or any other such engagement ; for the same reason for which I am hostile to the Channel tunnel :—that I am anxious to obtain the full advantage of the insular position with which Providence has endowed us.

"2. In saying this I lean neither to the right nor to the left—neither to Germany nor to France. My wishes and sympathy are entirely with whichever side most promotes peace.

"3. I do not think that Salisbury has given or can have given any tangible support or adhesion to the Triple Alliance : for he is a very different Salisbury to the Foreign Minister of 1878 or the Prime Minister of 1885. Should he have done so, he will have ruined his reputation as a British Foreign Minister.

"4. For my part I am content with Fergusson's¹ last answer ; and so, I thought, was the House of Commons.

¹ Sir James Fergusson, 6th Bart. (1832–1907). M.P. 1854–68, and 1885–1906 ; Governor of New Zealand 1873, and Bombay 1880 ; Under-Secretary for India 1886–7, and for Foreign Affairs 1886–91 ; Postmaster-General 1891–2.

"5. If, however, that is not so, and it is felt that the Liberal party should say anything further, I feel strongly that that should be said, in the first place at any rate, in the House of Lords. There is the Foreign Secretary, and there is the Prime Minister. Why then not drink at the fountain head instead of once more seeking the muddy tap, so often tasted, of Fergusson? No one could raise the question with more knowledge, judgment or experience than Kimberley: unless

"6. You could say something yourself. A measured, guarded, weighty deliverance from yourself, as brief as you like, (and indeed the shorter the better) would be invaluable. Personally I should prefer a speech to an article which must be relatively long and expanded.

"7. I earnestly hope that if Harcourt speaks he will also be measured, guarded and brief. To raise false expectations in France would be as fatal a policy as to join the Triple Alliance.

"I hope these views will not be unacceptable to you, (except the playful poke about the Channel tunnel), although possibly very ignorant; as, for the present at any rate, I am only a spectator, 3,500 feet above the sea and 3,500 miles from public life.

"Y. affly.,

"AR."

In October he spent a couple of days at Hawarden. The only guests were Scott Holland and Mr. Gladstone's trusted secretary, Algernon West.

October 29th.—"A. West's idea is that Mr. G. should be in Cabinet without office. I pointed out two radical difficulties: 1. Mr. G.'s consent to such an arrangement. 2. The finding of a person sufficiently self-sacrificing to be a dummy premier. I sent for the boys and they arrived this evening. They went to a performance at the Hawarden gymnasium, sitting on each side of Mr. G. The latter came back chilled and tired, and lost control of himself (for the third time in my experience) in speaking of the Irish rebellion of 1798. In vain did I try to keep him off and turn the subject."

Rosebery went quietly to Althorp early in December, and took part in "a long palaver" with Spencer, Harcourt, and Morley, with Mr. G. presiding.

"We discussed every imaginable subject from a list brought down by Mr. G. Egypt, as to which I said that the Government which *simultaneously* gave Home Rule to Ireland and evacuated Egypt would be a bold one, finance, etc. etc."

On the next day Mr. Gladstone came to Mentmore.

"After dinner, Mr. G. in the amber room hoped that I should soon find it possible to return to public life. On this we talked with some fulness. He was emphatic on the point that when one had attained to a certain point in politics it was not possible to retire."

The old year ended by the transport of the whole party to Petworth to greet the new one in an atmosphere of loving companionship.

It was rough snowy weather after the New Year and until Rosebery started alone for Milan on January 17th. It was equally cold there, though dry during the week of his stay, when for the first time he was able to devote himself to the picture galleries and the library. He wrote :

"Spent some of the day with Leonardo's Last Supper. What a divine legacy for a man to leave. Its very damaged condition makes it more venerable and striking. The Christ is the fated, weary man of sorrows. On each side Leonardo has introduced alternative figures of Christ,—as if to show that it was not for want of realising the possible types that he has chosen the one that he has. The one is the soft almost feminine angelic face,—on the right. On the left is the keen, suffering, brilliant face. But Leonardo has chosen best."

He passed on to Brindisi, where he saw an Austrian-Lloyd steamer which one of the Vienna Rothschilds had hired for his own use "waiting by the wharf for him, blazing with electric light. It has been there these eight days. I entered my oil-lit vessel at 1 a.m." He preferred the full journey by Cape Matapan to the short cut from Patras, and thence had

the whole deck to himself, basking in warm sunshine.

"I am reading Gibbon and Casanova through. The latter is unexpressibly long, but is an extraordinary picture of manners and morals in the eighteenth century, which should not be banished because of the occasional obscenity, which is no worse than Smollett, and is not in all the eight volumes equal to a page of Zola. After reading Casanova no explanation is necessary of the fall of Venice. She had evidently fallen long before Napoleon arrived: he only picked her out of a dunghill."

He found Athens a French provincial town with a German Schloss tacked on to the Acropolis, and seeing the troops drilling, felt confirmed in the wisdom of his discouraging action in 1886. But he visited all the great historic temples and theatres in close detail, not less than Schliemann's extraordinary spoil from Mycenæ. Marathon had a personal message for him from his happy Christ Church days, as well as its famous old story.

"I started at 9 for Marathon with the same coachman who took poor Fred Vyner. He had little if anything new to tell. I thought the peasantry looked hungrily at me as I went, and regretfully as I returned. This may have been fancy. We stopped on the bridge where Fred and his party were captured.

"Alas! Alas! We thought it an excellent joke at the time, and were only undeceived by his murder. Marathon is a little mound with excavations like a gravel pit in the midst of a parochial plain like a village common. I lunched on the mound and meditated sagely on fame."

He made more pilgrimages to the Acropolis, worked on the character of Pitt, and "had cuttlefish for luncheon, a great delicacy here. But I could not eat *pieuvre* with enjoyment." He started for Sicily (February 8th), and found snow falling and Lent beginning. So he hastened on to Naples. There were Italian friends to greet him, but he had said the last good-bye to the godmother of his early Naples

days, Lady Holland. She died in London in September 1889. It was still wintry, but he was busy, because, besides his customary visits to book-shops and curiosity shops, the idea of a Naples villa was maturing in his mind, and he visited various houses, all unsuitable, under the care of a young Italian friend who knew every palace and every inhabitant of every palace. Herbert Bismarck arrived, but after some five days the weather broke again, so Rosebery went on to Rome and Venice. All this time he had been reading Gibbon: "What a solid dignified piece of work, with his buffoon face smiling a fat smile of smug raillery now and then." He never felt well at Venice, and after two days there the sight of a party of English acquaintances goaded him on to a direct journey to London, where he found his children dumb with astonishment at his arrival. He made the Durdans his headquarters, riding most days, spending time with the children and noting the different ways in which they were changed by the break-up of home. He was restless and slept badly. Mr. Gladstone came one day, and they talked of a thousand things; and Rosebery often saw Canon Rogers, now at Mickleham. The last day of March brought the death of Lord Granville.

"Alas! Alas! No man can fill, or ever I think take an interest in, the place he filled so conspicuously well in the House of Lords."

A day or two later:

"After dinner drove to John Morley's to take him at his word as to coming with me to Granville's funeral to-morrow. It is extraordinarily kind of him. Sat with him till 11.15."

His friend knew the pang that it must be for him to stand so soon at another graveside. The next day Reginald Brett came for a great part of it, full of kindness; and then Rosebery started off again for a foreign tour. Kindness greeted him again at Paris, where Baron Alphonse de Rothschild offered him

the use of Ferrières or of his Cannes villa ; but he carried out his plan of passing on to Biarritz. It was stormy there, and on the second day he wrote, "Spain is tempting," and on the fifth, "Spain is not only tempting, but has tempted successfully." He reached Madrid on April 15th, and was taken care of by Sir Clare Ford, whose inherited knowledge of Spanish art made him a perfect guide to the galleries and sumptuous palaces. But he went to the Escorial alone.

"It did not disappoint even my expectations, yet I had come to Spain on purpose to see it. Grey and grim with a bleak mountain range behind, and a wilderness like the sage brush country of the Rocky Mountains around, it is the most sublime sepulchre for the quick and the dead ever devised by man. For the dead alone the Taj is of course supreme. The Church, more especially if the frescoes were removed and Cellini's Christ placed over the high altar, is internally the most expressive church I have ever entered ; with its cruel grey granite and its crushing silence it is the very valley of the shadow of death. The Escorial is the gloomy and costly embodiment of Philip II's character and reign—one of the most interesting and wonderful things in the world."

Since his calamity Rosebery had lived at his beautiful homes, and had visited some of the most beautiful places in Europe. But nothing had suited his mood so well as the Escorial. To borrow Thomas Hardy's plangent phrases :

"Fair prospects wed happily with fair times ; but alas, if times be not fair ! Men have oftener suffered from the mockery of a place too smiling than from the oppression of surroundings too sadly tinged."

Sir Clare took him to Toledo, where they were received by all the magnates of the province, civil and military. "The (too) civil ones remain with us all day, and I can understand the anguish of Royalty." With the Ambassador he also attended a bull-fight, and found—

"By judicious shutting of my eyes during the horse scene one can enjoy a bullfight very well. There was one in-

comparable matador Rafael Guerra (Guerrita) whose grace, coolness and dexterity made one in love with bullfighting."

The next day he came on a large crowd following an arrest, as he thought :

"But it turned out to be, between two obsequious gentlemen, smiling with condescension, Guerrita."

Then to Cordova and the delights of Seville, where the cathedral was in the course of reparation, but he was able to see its gorgeous treasures, the Alcazar, and the gallery of Murillos. Also the cigarette factory :

"Myriads of young virgins with babies. Statue over entrance with trumpet—to be blown whenever real virgin enters."

Also more than one variety of *olla*. After a few more days at Madrid Rosebery returned to France, laden with some attractive purchases from Madrid and Seville curiosity shops. On the way home he spent a day at Fontainebleau, which he had never seen, and found the forest quite equal to his expectations. His driver, a furious Bonapartist, who had served with Bourbaki, admitted that "President Carnot greatly strengthened the Republic by spending his money and giving without regard to party in charity." He emphasised the last. "But," he said, "all we demand is peace. We will never go to war again, unless attacked." "Not even for the provinces?" "No, no," he cried. "This is what I have always believed to be the real feeling of the peasantry in France."

And the event proved that Rosebery was right.

He returned to the Durdans, to unsettled weather, and to many sleepless nights. These sometimes drove him to ride at six in the morning, or even earlier. Thus passed May and early June, and on the doctor's recommendation he started for Marienbad, not as yet made fashionable for loyal Britons by

the presence of their Sovereign. Pausing at Brussels, he visited the picture gallery :

"There was a portrait of Alva by A. Moro exactly like Reay. Dutch pictures do not appeal to me : faithful reproductions of the aspects of humanity which we most wish to forget."

At Marienbad he began by overwalking, and was depressed by wet weather. His good friends the Butler Duncans arrived, and became his companions in more measured excursions. At the beginning of July :

"This morning I woke for the first time unfatigued. The moment I appeared on the parade Mr. and Mrs. Duncan separately and without agreement exclaimed, 'Why, how well you look this morning !' So much for one good night."

General de Galliffet also appeared at the baths. "He comes to thin himself : though he is not very fat 'a soldier is never thin enough.'"

Rosebery's cure was to be completed at Gastein in fresher air, and during his fortnight there he was able to indulge his passion for walking without overdoing it, except on one occasion when, in a severe tramp of over four hours, he climbed a hill perpendicularly for two hours, and had to leave off before reaching the top for fear of being benighted.

He was back in England by the beginning of August, to find two more causes for sorrow. His stepfather was dying, longing to be released, but lingering on till the twenty-first of the month. He and Rosebery had always been on affectionate terms, and Rosebery never wrote to his mother without a message, "Love to the Duke." He was a man of dry manner, sometimes speaking of politics with old-fashioned pomposity, but he never deserved anything but respect. William Cory described how in a quiet visit at Battle he enjoyed the plain dignified talk of his host. He had always been a rich man, and of late years one of the richest in England, but avoided any sort of ostenta-

tion. He was buried at Raby, amid a crowd of younger relatives between whom his millions were divided. Rosebery of course escorted his mother, and had to act as momentary host, for nobody knew to whom the inheritance would fall. When leaving, Rosebery left this note for his mother :

RABY CASTLE, *August 31st, 1891.*

“MY DEAREST MOTHER,

“I must write a line to thank you for these two happy days, for such they have been to me. I cannot recollect that we have ever been two days alone together in our lives, and I have enjoyed them greatly : the more, as, widowed mother and widowed son, the hand of God has brought us so near to each other. If my staying has been any solace to you it will be an additional pleasure.

“I need not say how great a happiness it will be to me to be of assistance to you, and how entirely I and my children and my houses will be at your service.

“Your loving son,
“AR.”

CHAPTER XIII

COUNTY COUNCIL : GENERAL ELECTION : FOREIGN
OFFICE : LABOUCHERE

EARLY in the new year (1892) Rosebery took advantage of his freedom for a jaunt to Italy, Naples of course being the main point. There was snow at Milan followed by a drizzle, so he hurried south, and found his adored city bathed in sunshine—which was far from being a certainty. Sir Thomas Farrer, one of the bright lights of the Civil Service, and an old friend, was there, and Rosebery spent much time with him. On most days they sat and talked for an hour or more. Rosebery made a number of not distant excursions, and visited several villas, including the Villa Delahante, to the charms of which he was destined soon to succumb. Two days at Rome were mainly spent in the company of Lord Dufferin and his family at the Embassy.

February 2nd.—"To St. Peter's. I really think that the Church of the Escorial on the whole is more terribly impressive, more overwhelming. Walked to the Ara Coeli in honour of Gibbon (they *were* saying vespers), to the Capitol, the Forum, and Palace of the Cæsars."

It will be recalled that Rosebery resigned the Chairmanship of the County Council in July 1890; and now that new elections were pending in March he was urged to become a candidate. He had already (January 11th) explained to the electors for the City that, since contests this time would evidently be on political lines, whereas he had stood on non-political grounds, he could not now appear there as a candidate. Then St. George's in the East, comprising the district long notorious as Ratcliff Highway, appealed to his sympathy for the workers and invited him to stand. He declined, but in doing so issued what amounted to

a manifesto defining his policy for London. He demanded the removal of petty restrictions on expenditure, the control of the water supply, the readjustment of rates, the control of the police, and, as infinitely the most important, the union of the City and County with as little friction as possible, so as to create a London Council in fact as well as in name.

The development of London, as we all know, has not followed these lines; more especially, perhaps, owing to the almost fantastically rapid growth of outer London than for any other reason.

All through the spring Rosebery was in frequent communication with Mr. John Benn, his close ally in Council politics. He attended a dinner given by Sir John Lubbock, his successor as Chairman, and several meetings held on behalf of Progressive candidates. At one of these for the City of London, with Prebendary Rogers in the Chair (April 30th), he developed the theses of his manifesto, carefully guarding himself against the supposition that he was attacking the City of London, but definitely forecasting the abolition of the Corporation as a separate existence within a short time. For once his gift of prognosis was quite at fault.

On the following evening John Morley presided over a great meeting in St. James's Hall, Sir Charles Russell and many other Members of Parliament being on the platform. Rosebery spoke at length in defence of the Council against the hostile criticisms of Lord Cross and Sir Henry James. It was these attacks, he said, which had made him leave the shadow where he was. To his hearers he seemed somewhat aged and tired, and showed signs of unaccustomed nervousness.

Meanwhile Mr. Benn had not been idle. As candidate for East Finsbury, a workers' constituency, he persuaded it without difficulty, and Rosebery with a great deal, that the late Chairman would make him an admirable colleague. The passive candidate merely stipulated freedom from meetings and canvassing. He was duly elected by a majority of over a

thousand, and the Progressives won a goodly victory throughout London. When thanking the electors at a meeting in the Clerkenwell Road (March 14th) he dwelt on the present impossibility of non-political candidatures, bantered the Liberty and Property Defence League, and then spoke seriously of the coming reorganisation of the Council, pleading for an unpaid executive, and with deep conviction of the need for a unified London.

At the first meeting of the Council Rosebery was invited to resume the Chairmanship, and agreed to do so for a time, describing himself as a stopgap for the weeks needed for reorganising the conduct of business. He soon (March 22nd) indicated in detail the directions in which the Council would have to decide between different methods of prescribing the functions of its Chairman, the size of its committees, its financial policy, etc.

On June 27th he wrote resigning the post of Chairman, explaining that the work for which he had given his help to the Council was in a fair way towards completion.

The life of the Duke of Clarence, with all its great prospects and fond hopes, had been cut short on January 14th, and in February Rosebery paid a visit to the bereaved parents at Eastbourne, where the Duke of Devonshire had lent them his beautiful house of Compton Place. There was much intimate talk of the past and of the future. And there was one allusion to *Pitt* :

“The Prince as he lit his candle to go to bed said, ‘By the by, you have been very hard on my great grandfather George III, but the Queen rather takes your view, and thinks you are right.’”

Two private troubles followed, serious though not crippling. Since his wife's death Rosebery had largely reduced his establishment of house and stables, and had cut down his general expenditure. But now appeared the reverse of the medal. A brilliant young

American friend, charming himself, and married to a charming English wife, was over-sanguine in finance, and Rosebery had invested considerably in a Western mine, of which the American had charge. The enterprise collapsed entirely, and its unlucky promoter was due to return home from a fruitless voyage to Europe.

March 1st.—"He leaves for America to-morrow: I was told that a kind message from me would be welcome: I at once wrote that if he would not come to me I wished him Godspeed, etc."

March 2nd.—"At breakfast at 8.30 a note arrived to say that he had shot himself in the night. Alas! Alas! It turns out that he called on me at 10 last night. What an end to what a splendid glowing life. . . . Thank God I never said or wrote an unkind word to him; or even thought one of him that I can remember."

Three days later a telegram came—

"To say all my Australian money gone plus certainly £3,300, probably £10,000E., and that to avert further calls I must commence legal proceedings. Verily misfortunes never come single."

On the fatal March 1st Rosebery had been spending the evening with Rogers at Bishopsgate. He had ventured on one more field of enterprise, having written a sermon which his old friend delivered in St. Paul's the following afternoon, Ash Wednesday. The author attended the service, and concluded:

"It was not very successful, I think! I had no time to give it."

Only a rough draft of this discourse exists, the manuscript having been destroyed after Canon Rogers's death. The text was Ezekiel xxxvii. 3, the marvellous vision of the valley of the dry bones, and of the winds of Heaven that breathed life into them. The sign, the preacher said, was given not merely to Israel, but to all humanity. And therefore to each nation, and to this city, under the fatherhood and guidance of God.

The draft proceeds to enlarge on conditions at home and in the British Empire. It is unfinished, and it is doubtful whether Canon Rogers delivered it precisely in this form. Such a wealth of rhetoric was foreign to his own manner of preaching, at any rate.

The discourse was to pay a double debt, for a day or two later Rosebery drove from the Durdans to Mickleham—

“Where I gave Rogers a tag to adapt his Ash Wednesday sermon to one for the re-opening of Mickleham Church.”

On April 7th Rosebery started alone for Portugal, thus completing his itinerary of South and South-western Europe. He saw all the sights of Lisbon, visited Fielding's grave, and was enthralled, as every traveller must be, by the unrivalled charm of Cintra, an unparalleled sight of verdure and wide prospect for the palaces of kings, and by the tasteful Moorish splendours of Montserrat. He passed on by Bádajoz to Seville, again coming in for the gorgeous ceremonies of Easter. It was fitfully wet, but there were processions day and night. One was to start at midnight (April 13th), with a party dressed as Roman soldiers—

“So I determined to wait up and see the original sight. Alas, I little knew what I bargained for. One, two, three, passed. It rained heavily for an hour. Yet in the Calle de la Sierpe there were always many people. After 4 it became so crowded that one could hardly move, as many who had been to bed returned. At 5 came broad daylight, and at 6.30 the procession. The crowd was flippant and rather drunk. . . . I tottered to bed (for I had been on my feet for eight hours) at 7. At 8.30 I was woke by the procession returning.”

But the great religious ceremonies were more successfully seen; and he also witnessed the curious arrival of six bulls for the next day's fight. They came from the meadow which they inhabited at full gallop, escorted by three horsemen and thirteen trained oxen. The Comtesse de Paris and her son

rode at the head of the charge. When the bulls arrived at the enclosure, by an ingenious arrangement the oxen, like the trained elephants at a *keddah*, helped to hustle their doomed brethren towards the line of boxes facing the ring.

“As each enters his cell the door is deftly shut and the lamp withdrawn. The bull is left in solitary darkness till he shall come out next day into the full glare of the bullring and die. It struck me as tragic and pitiful.”

But the next day :

“Guerrita is one of the most graceful of human beings.”

Three days at Granada in perfect weather followed. The Alhambra—

“ . . . surpasses expectation in delicacy, refinement, and idealism. Two or three Moorish embassies have been here and have been observed to weep, and there are families in Tetuan who have preserved the keys of their Granada houses for generations, against the time they shall return which will be when the stone hand on the Gate of Justice grasps the stone key.”

There is a note of rapture in Rosebery's musings on Granada, only surpassed by his musings on Naples. Had his affections not been pre-engaged, he can easily be imagined as investing in a *château en Espagne*. He spent (May 1st) a pleasant day or two at Madrid, and a couple in Paris, which he found as *triste* and deserted as Edinburgh. In the carelessly scandalous London world there had long been a story ascribing irregular parentage to Lord Dufferin. That distinguished man's features were not of the accepted British type; but there was nothing in them to warrant the rumour here disposed of.

“Dufferin said, ‘I want to speak to you on a subject which would make some people very angry, but not me, I mean the story of Dizzy being my father.’ He then told me that his parents were married in 1826 (I think), and went abroad

immediately, and that he was born ten months after marriage. They did not return to England until 1834, when they made Dizzy's acquaintance. As to the alleged fondness of Dizzy for him, he had hardly spoken to him above three or four times in his life, on one of which occasions Dizzy had been almost rude. I said I was not sure if I ought to give up my authority. He said, 'I know who it is, and I have had a long talk with her.' 'What did she say?' 'That if it had been true it would have been equally creditable to all parties.' He is going to set matters right in a short preface to his mother's works."¹

After his return home he was installed an Elder Brother of the Trinity House (October 25th), and in the autumn spoke at the banquet given by the Lord Mayor to that famous Corporation.

The months of May and June passed much as usual, with some quiet entertaining, and the resumed gathering of old friends for the Epsom summer meeting.

There was also a return to the arena of politics. Rosebery had been busy with the County Council reorganisation; but this was being concluded, and he had to decide for or against a definite resumption of the heavier burden. It is evident that he did not appreciate how deeply he was committing himself. Now, just as happened several years later, he could not recognise the fact that once a man in middle life has won the confidence of his countrymen in high office, he must be prepared either to take up work again or to disappear altogether. So that when he took part in political conclaves and attended political meetings he did not realise that the net of the veteran *retiararius* of Hawarden was already over his shoulder, and that he would never extricate himself.

A great meeting at Edinburgh (May 13th) welcomed "the occasion of his return to political life." In a long speech he deprecated the use of that phrase, for he was not sure of his intention. He was only there

¹ This was done in the "Account of the Sheridan Family," prefaced to the edition of her *Songs, Poems and Verses*, published 1894.

lest it should seem that he was not loyal to Liberal principles, or to the leader whom he had introduced to Midlothian—the proudest reflection of his life. After touching on Scottish questions, he devoted the rest of his speech to Ireland, and particularly to Lord Salisbury's recent address to the Primrose League. The Prime Minister had spoken of "a hostile Ireland on our flank." Rosebery fastened on the phrase like a terrier, and said that to win the country to Home Rule nothing else was needed than to rub that speech into every voter in the United Kingdom.

At the end of the month (May 26th) he was in Birmingham, the hostile stronghold. His speech, in his most effective strain of humorous argument, was mainly devoted to the Liberal Unionists, Jesse Collings, the subordinate, and Joseph Chamberlain, the master of eulogy and invective—"I think he prefers the power of invective." Home Rule, compared with the watery proposals of the Ministry for Irish Local Government, was again the principal theme, and was uncompromisingly urged on the meeting.

Next he went to support T. A. Brassey (June 9th), his old friend's son, in his assault on a purely Tory fortress at Sutton in Surrey, presenting a general indictment of the Government's policy.

There was a great Roxburghshire meeting at Kelso (June 16th), with more staunch advocacy of Home Rule and the query whether Ireland only exists for the benefit of Ulster; and another in support of the Liberal candidate for Edinburgh City. Here the opposition was in the hands of Lord Wolmer,¹ a rising light among Liberal Unionists, and Rosebery held him up as a striking instance of the absorption by Conservatism of men who had before been really Liberal and still used the name. Rosebery's last appearance before the election was at Whitechapel, in support of the ever-faithful John Benn. There would be no disturbance of foreign policy, he said, if the Liberals were returned to power. He again

¹ Second Earl of Selborne, *b.* 1859.

dealt with Ulster, and devoted the rest of his remarks to the vexed questions of London government.

Parliament was prorogued on June 28th, and the election followed. Liberal hopes had flown high. Gladstone, we are told,¹ reckoned on winning by eighty or a hundred. Such by-elections as that at Rossendale had stimulated such forecasts. A month earlier Mr. Gladstone had told Rosebery that the Queen had intimated through Ponsonby to Harcourt that her exclusions were Dilke and Labouchere.

May 28th.—"He discussed Labouchere as a Minister, spoke of his own deafness as a Cabinet disability, and was in the highest spirits. He was averse to giving Asquith Cabinet office, as to Bryce he spoke doubtfully."

Now, when the leader and John Morley arrived at Dalmeny, the framework of a possible administration was discussed and re-discussed. Harcourt also sent a list of names.

July 3rd.—"Morley came to my room at 11 p.m. In confabulation till midnight. 'If you do not join the Government it is hamstrung; it cannot last three weeks after Parliament begins, etc., etc.'"

July 4th.—"Mr. G. came to my room with his lists, which we talked over till luncheon without touching the capital point."

It was windy, rainy weather, and the electoral barometer also sank to "stormy." By July 6th the hope of a good majority had faded, and Mr. Gladstone began to show signs of depression.

"Were he twenty years younger he would care little, but he now stood on the razor's edge with regard to his power of work. His great comfort was that all was in the hands Almighty God. He evidently wanted to talk to some sympathetic person, so I sate with him in the library."

July 8th.—"Mr. G. and I drove about the park in my phaeton this afternoon. He was depressed and feeble, saying that he supposed I had no comforting consideration

¹ *Life*, bk. x, ch. vii.

to offer him—which indeed I had not. He said, ‘A great trial of this kind throws one back on oneself, and makes one examine oneself, and I now see how for the last six years I have been buoyed up with the belief that we should have a great majority and that the Irish business would be a very short business.’ He bears up with wonderful courage.”

Then a few guests arrived, including Bouverie Primrose.

July 10th.—“An amusing scene. My uncle says to Mr. G., ‘I will move round to the left, as the left is my bad ear,’ and acts accordingly. Mr. G. then, not hearing a word, composedly moves round in turn to my uncle’s left, saying, ‘I will come round here, as the right is my best ear.’ Mr. G. said with some animation, but perfect good humour, ‘After being shown all over the country for four hours yesterday, like a dwarf at twopence a head, I have some right to privacy.’”

The next day Gladstone opened up the subject of the leadership of the Lords. It would be the general opinion, he observed, that Rosebery would be the fittest person to cope with Salisbury in debate. This he put very strongly. Rosebery demurred, saying that Kimberley was the best. His chief believed that Kimberley would not continue, and that Spencer would be the fittest, failing Rosebery himself, in view of his mastery of the Irish Question. Rosebery thought that Spencer would do very well, but that all round Kimberley was best.

The last blow fell on July 13th, when Gladstone’s own majority fell to 690. He had hoped for some 3,000, but Rosebery had some reason to fear that he might be beaten outright.

Rosebery had faced the fortnight’s campaign manfully, but the strain had been terribly severe, apart from any heart-searchings about his own future. With a wearied captain, a discouraged crew, and an ebbing political tide, it seemed a ghastly parody of the voyage of thirteen years before with youth on the prow and happiness at the helm. Lady Fanny, the

wife of Edward Marjoribanks and sister of Randolph Churchill, a woman of the finest sympathy and understanding, was one of the small party. She saw how her host was being tortured by memories, and in the middle of the contest sent him a note begging him to leave his guests and seek quiet for a few days elsewhere. But he saw it out, and only on July 16th joined a yacht on the west coast, in company with two Scottish political friends, one of them his faithful friend and regular correspondent William Patten : starting from Wemyss Bay, round the Mull of Cantire, for a night at Jura, and so to Oban. This little tour relaxed the strain somewhat, as the notebook shows. After fetching his two boys from Dalmeny, he started again from Oban for a longer trip. It is only possible here to record his visit to Dunvegan in Skye (July 29th), though other of his impressions were memorable. He was equally impressed by the chief and by his home.

“Macleod is a noble-looking old man of 80 with an even nobler sister of 82, who has been the guardian angel of the people. She remembers Walter Scott at Abbotsford, as she told me, commending warmly Miss Ferrier’s novels, with his heavy face lit up. (She rather prefers Ferrier’s novels to Sir W’s.) She sate sunning herself. I did not see enough of her. . . . There is nothing like Dunvegan that I know of in hoary antiquity and tradition and genuineness.”

August 1st found him back at Dalmeny. On his peaceful cruise he must have been reminded that romantic Scottish mountains and cherished feudal towers did not tell the whole story of our islands, for from the start he read *Castle Rackrent* again, and much of *The Absentee*. But he was also directly bombarded from many quarters. His long intimacy with his chief did not prevent the existence of cross-purposes between them. The reserve of the one, and the qualifications with which the other guarded most of his utterances prevented the interchange of simple statements. Lord Acton, who

enjoyed Gladstone's fullest confidence, wrote (July 18th) that the leader had thought the question of office really settled, because he and Rosebery had gone into matters of detail which implied that he would join. If there were really a hitch, the whole scheme of negotiation and distribution of offices would have to be begun over again. Acton could not believe that Rosebery would keep Gladstone's offer in suspense, or that he would refuse the great position and the greater inheritance which were his. Rosebery replied :

DUNVEGAN, *July 29th*, 1892.

"MY DEAR ACTON,

"I duly received your kind letter at Portree, but am in some perplexity how to answer it. For Mr. Gladstone did not make me an offer of any kind at Dalmeny : indeed, he hardly had the opportunity of doing so. I was anxious that he should not : as my personal views—I mean those as to my own future—are unchanged, and, had an offer been made, I must once more have stated them. That is all I have to say. I wish it were more acceptable.

"Yours sincerely,
"AR."

Acton replied :

August 2nd, 1892.

"If so, it will be a festive day for a variety of people, at home and abroad, and a very sad one for

"Yours truly,
"A."

On August 3rd Rosebery wrote to Harcourt, Spencer, etc., and sent a letter to Arnold Morley, the trusted Liberal Whip, for delivery to Mr. Gladstone. Spencer had begged him to come within consulting distance : "Pray think of us, and come and help us." The answer was :

"The reason I do not come South is not that I am happy here, or that I am indifferent to my friends, but because I have never wavered in the resolve that so far as my own will can avail, my political career should end with the General Election."

Harcourt's appeal was more subtly persuasive.

"You will have seen in the papers," he said, "the account of Gladstone's illness. . . . I need not picture to you what are the heavy responsibilities and cares that fall upon us all in such a situation. . . . I greatly mistake your character if you should be unwilling to give us your aid and counsel and support in this critical conjuncture, and I sent a telegram to Oban entreating you to return to London. . . . I feel sure you will not be wanting in the offices of friendship to your friends who so much desire and need them."

Mr. Gladstone was laid up with a severe cough, and Harcourt wrote again the next day, saying that the attack was causing some anxiety. He repeated his appeal in moving terms.

In his reply (August 3rd) Rosebery explained :

"The eighteen months that I have spent in seclusion have convinced me that I was not intended or fitted for political life : all my interest is now divorced from it : should I be forced back into it again future extrication would be difficult if not impossible. . . . I have dwelt on the whole case in my letter to Mr. G., but cannot repeat all that egotistical detail even to so true a friend as yourself."

Spencer tried again (August 4th), and after dwelling on the blow to Gladstone, concluded :

"Personally I do not know what I shall do : I looked forward to serving under you in the House of Lords, and later on, as I hoped, in the Cabinet. Pray think what an opportunity you will lose, one which your ability, your aptitude for political life, your experience and hard work have created. The country will lose a Leader marked out for the times of change and difficulty which are coming."

In writing to Mr. Gladstone, Rosebery reiterated his distaste for political life in similar terms to those cited above, but explaining that he had twice left his seclusion, once to help Liberals on the London County Council, the other to make some political speeches

lest it be said that he held aloof from differences of opinion. But he could not conclude with a blank negation :

“ One word more. The sole consideration that weighs with me against every other consideration is the fact that at an advanced age you are once again about to commission the ship of state with a courage which I can only call sublime and which lays almost an obligation on your friends and followers to stand by you. But that is not an overpowering consideration except to those who are conscious of being able to render efficient service. I am not. And I could now retire without inconvenience.”

He went on to represent that Kimberley, he had long thought, would make an admirable Foreign Secretary, and that without himself there were four Liberal Peers of Cabinet rank.

The bombardment continued from all quarters, and from artillery of every calibre. Several relations wrote : Edward Hamilton set before him his duty in terms so frank as to risk the loss of friendship : Reginald Brett appealed in a tone of unusual seriousness and depression. Ronald Ferguson, no unquestioning Gladstonian, and living much in a Unionist circle, was sure that the Liberal party as a whole would go to the devil before long if Rosebery left it. The fact would be established that “ Joe ” had chosen the better part in trying to make the Tories good instead of trying to make them out bad.

John Morley, however, took the literal part of the *deus ex machina*. He jumped into the Scotch express, having fired off this note :

SPENCER HOUSE, *August 4th, 1892.*

“ MY DEAR ROSEBERY,

“ To your disgust and indignation you will see me about an hour or so after you get this. I only come as bearer of a letter from Mr. G. You’ll give me some breakfast anyhow ?

“ Ever your affectionate,

“ J. MORLEY.”

The host noted (August 5th) :

"J. Morley arrived early. Walked with him most of the day and rode. The children dined with us at 7—a fascinating little banquet. At 8.30 I drove him into Edinburgh, and we went to London by the 9.30. He told me that Mr. G. before talking to me about the leadership of the Lords (on July 11th), and as he fancies offering it to me and my accepting it, told him he considered it carried with it the *jus successionis*, as he did not believe that Harcourt could ever lead the Liberal party. Harcourt has written Mr. G. a secret letter about his eyesight. He has been leading Mr. G. a terrible life, had a tremendous interview with him on Wednesday, and spoke of standing aloof."

Mr. Gladstone's letter must be given in full.

Secret.

1, CARLTON GARDENS, *August 4th*, 1892.

"MY DEAR ROSEBERY,

"My first duty is to thank you most cordially for the personal kindness, indeed I must say tenderness of your letter. But the letter is an event, with which you will I am sure desire me to deal frankly according to my sense of the facts.

"There are three points to which I must refer.

"The first is your conviction of your own unfitness for public life. I distinguish between this conviction and your desire to escape from public life, for I am quite sure that, under the circumstances of the case, you would regard that desire as no more than dust in the balance.

"With respect to the conviction I have only to say that I have never known a case where such a conviction on the part of the person concerned was allowed by him to prevail against the clear, unhesitating, unanimous judgment of friends, and the no less unequivocal judgment of the world.

"Your most touching reference to me leads me to say a word upon this isolated aspect of the case; to repeat, in fact, to you what I have more than once during the last six years urged upon others, sometimes with success. It is the undeniable truth, that in contemplating what may happen next week, and what has to follow the probable event, I am simply waging a daily and hourly battle against Nature, with no sort of personal assurance as to my capacity to sustain it.

On the contrary, full of apprehension and misgiving ; but yet inevitably forced on by the knowledge or belief that the demand is one made upon me by the crisis, and that that demand is morally inevitable. I have not the same command over the actions of others as over my own. But my convictions about them may be as clear, or even clearer. And in this case I feel that the very same appeal, which the facts make to me, they also make to you ; and that the appeal entails the very same obligations.

“ I will not now dwell on what happened at Dalmeny, further than to say that, when I left in your hands provisional statements connecting your name with the Foreign Office ; when I discussed with you, and leant to its association with, the leadership in the Lords, and when I also spoke of the representation of the Department in the Commons, without receiving from you an adverse sign (nay more than one positively favourable), my impressions were such, that I am now taken by surprise.

“ But I go back, as you do, from that period to our conversation at Mentmore in the winter ; when you made the same plea, and when I found myself compelled to offer the same reply. It is my fixed assurance, founded on all I know of public life, of Great Britain, and of its people, that what I then said was right ; that you had no open choice before you ; that your acceptance was predetermined by previous acts, and that the nation would not tolerate your refusal.

“ What I then stated was, I think, absolute ; and did not need, and scarcely admitted, strengthening. Nevertheless, much corroboration has been supplied to it by the varied and admirable services which you have since rendered to the public cause.

“ I am aware that we, your friends and colleagues, are deprived of all semblance of a title to urge this plea with respect to your public speeches in the interval. But the main element of the whole case, in my mind, is the solid, permanent judgment of the nation. And, as regards that judgment, and the grounds which the nation will think it has for forming it, the force of the facts is I think stubborn, and not to be denied.

“ I am sure I may rely upon your kindness not to send an unfavourable decision in this important matter without seeing me ; and you will believe me to remain,

“ Always affectionately yours,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

Meanwhile, Windsor Castle was also wondering. At the end of May, after Rosebery's Glasgow and Birmingham speeches, he had fallen from his eminence of favour. The Queen wrote to Sir Henry Ponsonby (May 30th), announcing that the Dissolution would come at the end of June, and proceeded :

"First of all she must say how dreadfully disappointed and shocked she is at Lord Rosebery's speech, which is radical to a degree to be almost communistic. Hitherto he has always said he had nothing whatever to do with Home Rule and only with foreign affairs, and *now* he is as violent as any one. Poor Lady Rosebery is not there to keep him back. Sir Henry must try and get at him through someone, so that he may know how grieved and shocked the Queen is at what he has said. In case of the Govt.'s defeat the Queen meant to send for him first, but after this violent attack on Lord Salisbury, this attempt to stir up Ireland, it will be impossible, and the G.O.M. at 82 is a very *alarming look-out*. . . . She thinks sometimes it will come to Sir William Harcourt! But he would command neither respect nor confidence."

Now that the crisis was come, and the dreadful names of Labouchere and Dilke were bruited abroad, minor delinquencies must be overlooked, and Sir Henry Ponsonby wrote (July 20th) :

"Lord Rosebery's position is a mystery, and as he has gone on board a yacht he is not at this moment accessible."

On the next day (July 21st) he described a conversation with Edward Hamilton, who did not know what Rosebery intended to do, but felt that if he stood aloof now he would probably be rejected by the Liberal party, and might retire from political life. Hamilton asked whether the Queen could write to Rosebery, insisting on his taking the Foreign Office. Sir Henry, the sagest of counsellors, proceeded :

"Sir Henry thinks that a little time should be taken for consideration before any letter of this sort should be written. At present, although there is every probability, there is no

certainty of a defeat of the Government, and it would not do to assume that Lord Rosebery would be called upon to take office yet.

"And then Sir Henry Ponsonby cannot quite make out what Lord Rosebery meditates.

"It may be health that keeps him afloat just now, it may be dislike of the Gladstonian programme, or it may be that he wishes to retire from public life.

"But it is also possible that he is waiting till the party ask him to take the Foreign Office, when he will make his own conditions, which are believed to be that he shall not be interfered with especially on the question of Egypt, or briefly that he will not abandon Egypt as many insist upon. If this is correct, it may be as well not to interfere at present, or at any rate till the views of the chiefs become a little clearer."

Hamilton, equally loyal to his chief and to Rosebery, persevered, and having seen Francis Knollys, again wrote asking that whenever the Queen had to send for Mr. Gladstone she should simultaneously communicate with Rosebery; and lay special stress on the necessity of securing him when giving her orders to Mr. Gladstone. This would be more effective than sending a message through the Prince of Wales.

But Sir Henry, ever prudent, objected even to this. He told the Queen that the matter must be fought out between Gladstone and Rosebery before she could interfere. After his interview with the new Prime Minister, he told the Queen that Rosebery had been informed of her wish that he should take the Foreign Office, but Mr. Gladstone feared that he would refuse on the ground of insomnia.

It ended in a letter from the Prince of Wales (August 14th), who had been told by the Queen that she herself could not put pressure on anybody to join this iniquitous Government.

Confidential.

R.Y.S. "ALINE," COWES, *August 14th, 1892.*

"MY DEAR ROSEBERY,

"Nobody dislikes more than I do to interfere in matters which not only do not concern me—but which might be

looked upon as indiscreet—but as we are such old friends and have so freely talked on so many subjects especially regarding politics and the probability of a Liberal Govt. coming into power which has now become a fact—you will I am sure forgive my writing to say—with what deep concern I have learnt from public rumour that you are disinclined to accept office in Mr. Gladstone's Govt.

“That you may differ with him on many salient points I can easily understand and appreciate—but I for one—who have my country's interest so deeply at heart—would deeply deplore if you were unwilling to accept the post of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs! a post which you have filled before with such great ability and which has not only been appreciated at home—but by all foreign countries.

“Though I know that the Queen has no desire to press you to accept this post—which for reasons best known to yourself you are disinclined to take—still I know how much she wishes for it, and I for one do most earnestly hope that you will reconsider what I understand is your present decision—or at least undertake to preside over Foreign Affairs for six months.

“There are many grave questions at this moment affecting our interests in India, Egypt and Morocco, and it requires a very watchful eye—to prevent Russia and France from harming us—and a thorough knowledge of the subject which nobody possesses more than you do. Let me therefore implore you to accept office—(if Mr. Gladstone will give you a free hand in Foreign Affairs—and not bind you to agree with him in *all* his Home measures) for the Queen's sake and for that of our great Empire! Forgive me bothering you, my dear Rosebery—but I should not write so strongly if I did not feel the grave importance of your accepting office in the present serious political crisis.

“I am,

“Yours very sincerely,

“ALBERT EDWARD.”

The quarry was now captured. Accordingly he replied to the Prince of Wales as follows :

38 BERKELEY SQUARE, W., *August 15th, 1892.*

“SIR,

“I have just received the more than gracious letter which Your Royal Highness has been so kind as to write to me.

"The difficulty that I have found in going to the Foreign Office is not public but private; for I have the gravest doubts as to whether my long loneliness and sleeplessness have not unfitted me for public life.

"However, the matter has now been practically taken out of my hands and settled in the way that Your Royal Highness wishes.

"More I cannot say now, except to beg that this communication may be considered as strictly private and personal to yourself.

"But I must be allowed to offer my sincere thanks for this fresh proof of Your Royal Highness's constant friendship for
"Your obedient servant,

"ROSEBERRY."

The victim narrated the whole story in a rough note:

August 11th, 1892.—"I went to Mr. G. at 2, at 1, Carlton Gardens. We sat on the sofa side by side. I said I feared I could not announce any change. He, much taken back, urged me to take advice. I said that in these cases a man must judge for himself. He broke out against this, said that there were men such as the late Lords Granville and Clanwilliam who were the sort of men to seek counsel of in such affairs. I admitted that I knew what the advice would be, but that no one not in my skin could conceive the loathing of politics that I had conceived. Perhaps it was that my nervous system had sustained a greater shock in 1890 than I was then conscious of, but there it was and he could not understand it. He said with great vehemence that he did, that for years past he had abhorred and loathed the contentious side of politics. I cited Lord Althorp and said that my case was stronger because of my orphan children. He denied the analogy and implored me for the sake of my children themselves and my posterity not to take such a course. He added that in these cases frankness was the truest kindness and that it would be said of me '*relicta non bene parmula*.' I said that I had discounted all that. After about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour I rose to go. I stood in front of him as he sat on the sofa. He clasped my hand in his and said with the most pathetic violence, 'God Almighty in His infinite mercy and goodness guide you to a right decision,' repeating this two or three times with the greatest solemnity.

"This was on Thursday, August 11. No further communication passed between us till Monday, August 15. Arnold Morley called and left a note from Mr. G. saying that he was just off to Osborne to submit my name to the Queen for the F.O. Late in the afternoon I telegraphed to him 'So be it.'

"On the next day I went to him by appointment at 3.30 p.m. I said to him, 'Well, you have got your way and I have not got mine, but it is on your responsibility—not mine.' He said that the Queen had insisted on it and offered to press it personally on me, but had not, 'Can you guess why?' I said 'No.' 'Because she thought this affair seemed loosely hung together and hoped it might fall through.' I said I was glad she had taken no part: she could only have secured my refusal, for I could not have yielded to her instance what I had refused to that of my friends and colleagues. He said with intense passion, 'You do not know what I have gone through in the past week. Do not repeat what I am going to say to a living soul—I have been treated BRUTALLY by one man. Never have I been so treated. At last I had to remind him that it was I who had received the commission. "But," he replied, "it is for us to consider whether we will join you."'

"He said that the French were well affected and I said that I hoped so, that I should tell Waddington that it was a mistake to suppose that I was hostile to France but that I should hint that goodwill to be fruitful must be mutual and practical.

"I also told him that the way in which my appointment had been brought about was probably the only method by which it could have been accomplished."

A day or two later he was at Osborne for his first audience :

"She held out her hand warmly. I kissed it. 'It is so long since I have seen you and you have gone through so much.' I said I wished she could have left me where I was. 'Oh no, I hope the work will be good for you, and then think of the reception of your name.' 'It is nothing but a name.' 'Oh no, much more than that. You know I have always given you good advice'—or words to that effect, quite maternally."

Nobody had followed this shifting scene more attentively than George Buckle, the Editor of *The Times*; because no publicist more entirely realised what was at stake. He had been over to Mentmore on the 14th, when he and his host had a long and earnest talk: "In the afternoon he sent a further powerful and affecting letter." He therefore hailed the news of Rosebery's acceptance with joy, feeling sure that the strenuous collar-work of the post would be the patient's best cure.

Another welcome letter came from Charles Cooper of the *Scotsman*. The newspaper had gone over to the enemy, so that personal association had greatly ceased, but Cooper now wrote that nothing could lessen his conviction that Rosebery, if he were willing, might be the staff and guide of the Empire. Countless letters came, signed by distinguished names—one from Cardinal Rampolla with a message from Pope Leo XIII, who had retained, he said, a most agreeable recollection of Rosebery's audience at the Vatican.

Much space has been given to the events of these few weeks, since they seem to mark a principal turning-point in his career, and to show up his state of mind in bright relief. "Incomprehensibility," his clear-headed uncle had said years before. This time he was equally puzzling to Harcourt's *esprit positif*, to Spencer's grand simplicity, and to Campbell-Bannerman's shrewd tolerance. John Morley, himself with a surface equally sensitive but of a different texture, sometimes lost patience, as in a letter to Harcourt of January 26th.¹ Even some of these intimates may have been tempted to believe, as many of the crowd did, that all this hesitation was not quite genuine. The story will have been poorly told if any reader concludes that there was any tinge of affectation in these comings and goings, or if he does not credit the reality of the conflicting emotions which seethed in that unresting mind.

¹ *Life of Sir W. Harcourt*, vol. ii, ch. x.

At the Cabinet on the following day, compromise was in the air. A subsidy of £1,000 a year to King Mwanga of Uganda was the first step ; then a telegram from Portal justified a three months' postponement of evacuation.

" In Mr. G's sitting-room, much walking about of Mr. G. between Harcourt and me. We did not sit down till 12.30. Bewildered colleagues in knot all round."

Harcourt, Herschell, and Rosebery met to draw up a *procès verbal*. This was done in terms stated by Harcourt, and as he wrote grimly to his son—" so far so good, for the present " ; Rosebery took Kimberley and Campbell-Bannerman off to luncheon. " This morning I did not think I should eat lunch as Foreign Minister." It indeed was for the present only. On October 20th another deputation from the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, comprising many leading Members of Parliament, attended at the Foreign Office. Its special object was to press the construction of a railway from Mombasa to the Victoria Nyanza. This was the only way, it was suggested, in which the behests of the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference could be obeyed. Rosebery was again cautious. He was not a dictator, but a single member of a Government which had responsibility not only in respect of the slave trade, but to the taxpayers. After briefly reviewing the circumstances, he said that his visitors represented that continuity of moral policy which Great Britain could never afford to disregard. That policy, he declared, is the salt that savours our history, and by it when we have passed away we shall come to be judged. Greece remains by the spiritual force of her literature ; Rome not by her campaigns, but by her laws and works of civilisation.

" And in the same way I believe that this country, when it stands before history, will stand, when all else has passed away, not by her fleets and her armies and her commerce,

but by the heroic self-denying exertions which she has made to put down this iniquitous traffic."

He repeated that he could not pledge the Government to pursue any course of policy in Uganda; but the cause they advocated must occupy a commanding place in the balance of considerations.

Those who thought with Harcourt that the anti-slavery movement was a mere cloak for annexationist ambitions remained on the alert, seeing that the real struggle on Uganda was yet to come. Rosebery asked the Prime Minister and Harcourt whether it would be better not to compromise, but that he himself should go. Walking with Asquith, he met Mr. Gladstone and Morley, who stopped them:

"Mr. G. took my arm (for the first time that I remember) and we walked round and round the Downing Street garden. He hinted vaguely at the Mombasa railroad, and said with much feeling that my behaviour had been beyond reproach. I said with more that he would not believe perhaps the pain it had given me to give him so much trouble—that it wrung my heart. He said he needed no such assurance. The interview was signally warm and tender."

So Rosebery stayed on.

The other breeze that ruffled the autumn calm was started by Rosebery's old friend Henry Labouchere.

"Oct. 1. Spencer and J. Morley dined with me. Labouchere has written to Wemyss Reid to say he will accept the Legation at Washington, leave Parliament, bury the hatchet, and come to a concordat about the succession to Mr. G.! Otherwise he promises triple venom after that event."

As has been said, Labouchere's professed republicanism, his fierce opposition to the Royal Grants, and his editorship of a journal which recalled the *Age* and the *Satirist* of a former generation, had kept him from receiving even a subordinate place in a Government to which he had undoubtedly helped to attach the

suffrages of the extreme Left. He had written to Wemyss Reid,¹ the trusted confidant of all Liberals :

“Rosebery’s gain would be clear. I have no personal dislike to him—quite the reverse. But he is much too clever a Peer to have as P.M. to my thinking. But were I in America neither this nor Egypt would be my affair.”

Wemyss Reid wrote to Morley, setting out the whole story ; Labouchere had, as always, been candid. He was indeed bitterly incensed, and had written, “I am quite prepared to use the arms put into my hands for my own advantage, not being of a modest or retiring habit of mind.” “The dangerous nuisance,” as he described himself, explained to John Morley that he wanted the matter settled before Parliament met, because he would get into a mess with his Radical friends were he to shirk Uganda, while if he were put into antagonism with Rosebery and an appointment were made later, it would be deemed a matter of buying and selling. The next move came from Mrs. Labouchere who, without telling her husband, sought an interview with Rosebery at the Foreign Office, “of not more than ten minutes.” He was somewhat touched by her persistence in her husband’s cause ; and I remember his contrasting the brilliant actress of the “seventies” with the very plainly attired lady who sat in his official room. From his record of the conversation, which lasted not ten but forty-five minutes, he evidently was kindness itself ; but he could not help asking “what would be the position if this proposal were made not on behalf of a Radical leader, but of a destitute duke ? Would not the columns of *Truth* teem with violent diatribes against so colossal a job ?” There followed explanation of some misapprehensions, and allusion to possible scandals, and the meeting closed amicably. Then came a note from Labouchere himself, stating how the

¹ Sir T. Wemyss Reid (1842–1905). Editor of *Leeds Mercury* 1870–87, of *The Speaker* till 1899. General manager of Cassell & Co. Author of several biographies of public men.

idea had originated, and describing his conversations with Ministers. Morley had spoken of insuperable difficulties, which in reality were "blessings in disguise," but, Labouchere observed—

"I don't quite believe in disguised blessings; in fact, I never heard of them except in a tract, and in Balfour's speeches, when he put the Nationalist M.P.s in prison. As regards my attacks on Rosebery in *Truth*, the Liberal party are divided as to what our principles of foreign policy ought to be in Europe and Africa. He takes one side, and I take the other. Of course I fight for my side. There is nothing personal in this. I did not adopt my opinions in order to attack Rosebery; but I have always held them and always fought for them. In America, however, there are no heathen to convert, there is no Egypt to retain, and there is no Triple Alliance."

Rosebery thereon wrote to Labouchere, establishing direct communication, and sent the papers to the Prime Minister. The Laboucheres suggested further ways of meeting the difficulty of a diplomatic reshuffle, and the business trailed on into the following year. Labouchere (January 4th) announced his intention of bringing in a Bill to allow Peers to surrender their peerdom and stand for the House of Commons. Rosebery expressed his concurrence, and this may have encouraged Mrs. Labouchere to call on him again in Downing Street to describe a scheme for her husband's immediate resignation of his seat, the appointment to be made later. Labouchere himself wrote three or four times, letters so excellent that they ought to be recorded in full, did space permit. Mrs. Labouchere, he said, had got it into her head that Washington was an Elysium, though Chamberlain had said it was a dreary hole, stiff and dull. He himself in this damp atmosphere suffered from a rheumatic affection in the neck and throat, which made sitting in the House like the torments of the damned. If he got to Washington he would stay there, like St. John in Patmos, and give up Parliamentary life. As to buying and selling, he would lose in the money

sense, because from investments he had three times what he could spend, while *Truth* brought in more than twice a Cabinet Minister's salary. Rosebery had offered to talk it over again with Mr. Gladstone, and if it were desired, with Harcourt and Morley. This was very kind, but all the Ministers had already spoken of insuperable difficulties, although each individually favoured the appointment, while wondering how Labouchere could give up the paradise of Parliament. "A Cabinet, in fact, is the firm of Jawkins and Spendlow on a large scale."¹ He thought that Rosebery overestimated his opposition. There would always be a section for non-intervention, but the safety of any Foreign Secretary is that not ten men in the House know anything about foreign politics, and, provided there is no war, want to know nothing.

"As for Washington, a man must be an utter fool who does not get on with the Americans. This is done by never expressing an opinion on party issues ; by occasionally making a speech at a dinner about the language of Shakespeare ; by feeding Senators and others ; by carrying out instructions like a machine ; and by generally professing that, if there are two countries made to love each other, they are England and America."

In his last letter of reply Rosebery wrote :

"Many thanks for your letters. One of my main regrets in not being able to do as you wish is that I shall not be in regular receipt of such fascinating despatches. . . . I can only repeat that I am very sorry that circumstances do not enable me to give you the promise you ask for."

Labouchere replied :

"*Fiat voluntas tua.* I daresay that if rheumatism will keep off, I shall get as much enjoyment out of the H. of C. as in writing you dispatches about seals from Washington."

¹ The misspelling of the famous partnership in *David Copperfield* is of course intentional.

Labouchere's enjoyment had not long to wait; but for the moment the final scenes of the comedy were played by Mr. Gladstone and Mrs. Labouchere. The Prime Minister had entered into the sport with great relish, and had suggested some phrases in Rosebery's first formal reply. Now he wrote (February 18th, 1893):

"*Ecce iterum Crispina.* My poor dear wife was horribly shaken this morning by a card inscribed Mrs. L., and a request for a moment's interview. This proved to be intermediary. I was to be the victim for 'five minutes': you know how these minutes stretch from the small photographs to the life size."

Needless to say that the veteran fencer, equipped with all the courtesies of the duelling ground, was not touched. "All things end at last, and we parted, seemingly in good blood."

The episode had a prompt sequel; and in its effects on Rosebery's position proved to be really important. For Labouchere, by capacity and ruthlessness, was the leading Radical figure: and a breach with him meant a breach with much of the fighting strength of the party. He might very possibly have made a success of the American mission, though it clearly was impossible to send him there at the time. As the correspondence shows, Rosebery was far from dismissing the notion off-hand.

During the year Rosebery still took no part in the doings of the House of Lords. Apart from his County Council work and the few political occasions that forced him to the platform, he spoke eloquently at Glasgow on housing and the need for playing-fields, and at the opening (May 13th) of Brockwell Park, Herne Hill, he described London as the prey of builders, and urged (June 6th) his friends on the County Council not to be remiss in securing open spaces, so fast disappearing under red and yellow villas. This was forty years ago, and we still keep on saying the same thing. The opening of the Polytechnic

in the Borough Road was his last civic duty of the year, and he presided on St. Andrew's Day at the dinner of the Scottish Corporation in London. He was at Sandringham for the Prince's birthday party, and was three times summoned to Windsor, where he was invested with the Order of the Garter on November 21st. When he had received Mr. Gladstone's proposal he had written as follows :

Private.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 6th, 1892.*

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"I am much honoured by your proposal to submit my name for the vacant Garter.

"My first impulse is, I confess, to ask you to excuse me. It seems to me that the time for Garters and the like has long gone by for me, and there is no one now to be pleased.

"Moreover I cannot help feeling that this decoration might well be utilised to lure some big fish who might be useful to the party ; and this solution would be much the most agreeable to me.

"But it has been my unwilling fate during the last two months to be engaged in so much irksome and painful correspondence with you that if you prefer to press your present proposal I shall not be so ungracious as to resist. Only I would ask that whatever you decide I may for this reason not hear any more on the subject.

"I have written exactly my whole mind on this subject and it reads very ungratefully. But I hope and believe that you will understand me. If I have omitted anything it is this—that it seems to me, particularly in these days, so much more distinguished to be undecorated (like yourself) than the reverse.

"Believe me,

"Yours affectly,

"AR."

The Queen asked if he already had the Thistle, for if he had, she would not allow him to give it up. On one of the other occasions conversation turned on names and titles, when Rosebery complained of his name having been taken for the Primrose League—"She did not quite like this, I think."

“HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE !”

“This Garter, brighter from the knee
Of him who uttered nothing—important.”

“*Mister*” *Rosebery loquitur* :

A Star and Garter ! Here’s a go !
Well, well, no doubt ’twas to be worn meant ;
And, as mere personal adornment,
It does look smartish, dontcher know !

All personal adornment’s vain,
Held Dr. Watts, holds dear McDougall ;
For dowdy dress and habits frugal
Befit the Democratic strain.

And I’m a Democrat—of course !
The Benjamin Franklin of the Peerage !
And yet—ah ! truly ’tis a queer age —
A Decoration has *some* force !

I wonder what the L.C.C.
Will say to this ! That I should spurn it ?
John Burns may swear I ought to burn it.
Still—it looks natty round my knee.

I need not wear it when I sit
Among the broadcloth’d heirs of Bumble !
But Foreign Minister too humble
Were butt of diplomatic wit.

Battersea’s pride my pride may scourge,
Well—he may find he’s caught a Tartar.
A robe—a coronet—a garter !—
Materials for a new “Pride’s Purge” !

The keen-eyed Democratic lynx
May watch me with alert suspicion,
As but a half-disguised patrician,
But—shame to him who evil thinks !

(*Left posturing complacently.*)

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By kind permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

KNIGHT OF THE GARTER, 1892.

He paid a flying visit to the unknown shores of Ireland, as the guest of John Morley, spending his time between two Lodges, and seeing the sights of Dublin. Dining with me at the Viceregal Lodge he made the acquaintance of our delightful friend Father James Healy. He was deeply impressed by the Library of Trinity College, and noted at Glasnevin Parnell's grave like a flower-bed, and the cross erected to the slayer of James Carey, "who died for his country at London, England."

Two years had passed since Lady Rosebery's death, and some of her husband's friends were surprised at his persistently continued display of household mourning, in various ways that seemed to them extravagant and unreal. His children were too long dressed in black; and for four or five years he went on using notepaper with the broadest black edge obtainable. For many years longer his letters still bore signs of mourning. In these days, since the Angel of Death has hovered over almost every home in the land, the custom here has changed—for the better, as most would admit. But at that date the era of professional mourners, and nodding plumes, and streaming hat-bands, had scarcely closed. In some foreign countries, even yet, much of the old pomp remains; and the different religious faiths expect their own injunctions to be observed. It is idle to judge harshly the ways whereby our poor humanity, at its wisest or at its weakest, seeks for itself some shred of passing comfort, or tries to pay its empty tribute to the dead. One may compare the confession of another powerful mind: Disraeli, the most loyal and grateful of husbands, was teased by Lady Bradford for his indulgence in this fancy. This, we are told, was his rejoinder:

"It is strange, but I always used to think that the Queen persisting in that emblem of woe, indulged in a morbid sentiment. And yet it has become my lot and seemingly an irresistible one. I lost one who was literally devoted to me . . . and when I have been on the point sometimes of terminating this emblem of my bereavement, the thought

that there was no longer any being in the world to whom I was an object of concentrated feeling overcame me and the sign remained.”¹

The recollections and prospects of the two men were far from being identical. One of them was seventy years old when he wrote, the other at this time was five-and-forty. But the words of the older man give some clue to the sentiments of the younger. And there we can leave it.

It is only fair to add that the children were not restricted to a régime of sable garb and excerpts from the Burial Service. The two girls paid their visit to a theatre to see *Walker, London*, and were kindly received by John Toole. Later the whole party went to see *The Private Secretary*. “It was a great success, for we all laughed amazingly.”

¹ *Letters of Lord Beaconsfield to Lady Chesterfield and Lady Bradford*, edited by the Marquess of Zetland. Introduction.

CHAPTER XIV

FOREIGN OFFICE : EGYPT : SIAM : THE IRISH GOVERNMENT BILL : NAVY ESTIMATES : GLADSTONE'S RETIREMENT

A LITTLE ceremony early in the new year only claims record in the light of later events. A presentation was made to Lewis Harcourt on his resignation of the Secretaryship of the Home Counties Liberal Federation. Rosebery presided, and dwelt on the brilliant distinction which the recipient would have won, even if in office, had he not chosen perhaps the nobler and certainly the more laborious part of working in obscurity for the regeneration of the Cause. Lewis Harcourt, in his reply, said that they recognised in Lord Rosebery all that was best in the English character. In him they saw the model citizen, the brilliant writer, the eloquent orator, the admirable municipal reformer and, above all, the practised and practical statesman. Both speakers strewed roses with ungrudging hands.

Later in January the Foreign Office was agitated by the ministerial crisis in Egypt, where the new Khedive Abbas Hilmy Pasha, a schoolboy in age and capacity, dismissed three ministers whom he considered too submissive to Downing Street. Rosebery's position was not easy, for several of his colleagues were so anxious to get out of Egypt that they would not consider a mild humiliation too great a price to pay. On the other hand, Lord Cromer's suggested measures reminded Rosebery of the *coup d'état* of December 2nd, 1851, and after a long Cabinet he drafted (January 17th) two compromise telegrams which were substantially accepted. "The Khedive gave in," he noted, "but snake scotched, not killed." Two days later the fight in the Cabinet was renewed for two



April 16. 1893

Mentmore,
Leighton Buzzard.

My dear Mr. Fildes

Many thanks for
letting me see Dilke's letter
which I return.

It is interesting and able,
but perhaps that Lockian
assumption of an omniscience
and precision which he
does not possess.

But much that would have
been possible and practicable
has been prevented by the
action of the young Khelive

1871

By.

hours, at the end of which Rosebery carried his further compromise telegram. Harcourt took Rosebery's view in the main, and was conciliatory, but his one real supporter was Bryce. Mr. Gladstone was very hostile, and fertile in historical precedents; Kimberley, Herschell, and Spencer did not support Rosebery, and all the rest looked on mutely. At the same time Rosebery told the Prime Minister that the army of occupation ought to be strengthened :

"Prevention is better than cure at all times : we have had a significant warning, and I fear if we do not take it we are at the beginning of a new and alarming phase of the Egyptian question . . . though it may be desirable to evacuate Egypt we cannot be jockeyed or intrigued out of it."

Later on he repeated to the Prime Minister his general reading of the situation. Sir Charles Dilke had written to Mr. Gladstone an expression of the Radical view.

MENTMORE, *April 16th, 1893.*

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"Many thanks for letting me see Dilke's letter, which I return.

"It is interesting and able, bar perhaps that Crokerian assumption of an omniscience and precision which he does not possess.

"No one is more sensible than I am of the delicacy and perplexity of our position in Egypt. Were we out of it I should on the whole rejoice. Nor am I insensible to the advantages offered by a convention on the basis of that of 1887 with a modified clause as to evacuation.

"But much that would have been possible and practicable has been prevented by the action of the young Khedive."

The Queen, always dreading the Liberal Government's attitude towards Egypt, complained that instructions had been sent to Lord Cromer without her sanction. Rosebery trusted that he would be acquitted of precipitation or neglect. Cromer had proposed to occupy all the Government offices and to seize the telegraph office. Had this somewhat violent scheme been adopted the Queen's assent would have

been necessary, but its rejection merely meant more time being given to the Khedive for reflection. A tumultuous storm of sinister telegrams had rained on the Foreign Office, so that it had been difficult for the Prime Minister to send details to Windsor.

A day or two after the Cabinet (January 18th) Rosebery described to the Queen the difficulties he found in commending Lord Cromer's views, with which he was in general agreement, to some of his colleagues, loyally concluding :

"Sir William Harcourt holds very heartfelt feelings in favour of general evacuation, but it is doing him no more than justice to say that he has been extremely conciliatory and good tempered in this business."

And there was even an element of discord on the side of the great public servant on the spot. The Foreign Secretary wrote to the Queen :

"Lord Rosebery makes every allowance for the crisis and the strain to which Lord Cromer has been subjected. But he cannot think that the tone of his telegrams was judicious, and this constituted indeed the greatest obstacle in Lord Rosebery's path.

"Lord Cromer is gouty ; but gout, though a disease by no means incompatible with statesmanship, is an element in the situation which requires vigilance on the part of the sufferer. That is to say, he must watch himself to see that it does not affect his manner or style. The French proverb might be converted into ' Il n'y a que la vérité et la goutte qui piquent ' : there were traces of both in Lord Cromer's telegrams. Hence the Cabinet was irritated.

"Lord Rosebery does not say this in detriment of a public servant whom he trusts, admires, and respects. But he is certain that had Lord Cromer simply telegraphed in response to Friday's telegram from the Cabinet, 'Pray give me authority to announce reinforcements, as the General and I cannot respond for order without them,' he would have had them without demur on Saturday morning ; and saved Your Majesty and one at least of your Ministers much anxiety."

Rosebery's correspondence with the Prime Minister on the Egyptian crisis shows no sign of the " hostility "

which the former noted on January 19th. It was evidently only directed against drastic military measures, and there was no copious interchange of letters such as had marked the Uganda crisis of the previous autumn.

The Queen, however, kept a vigilant eye on the Diplomatic Service. Rumours had reached her concerning two of its prominent members ; and Rosebery had to admit that Her Majesty's gracious letter had somewhat disconcerted him. Of one of the officials in question Rosebery had hoped that in the torpid and somnolent atmosphere of his present post his proverbial irritability would have lost something of its keen edge. To learn, therefore, that he had managed to tax the endurance of his phlegmatic and impassible surroundings was almost more than Rosebery could bear.

"For it is impossible to move him. It would be wrong on the one hand to foster by his promotion the race of impracticable diplomatists of which he is the ideal, while on the other hand it is clear that the Court does not exist which would not, after the briefest experience, pant for his removal. A post as Queen's Messenger of an exalted and special description, which would keep him in constant flight through the principal Capitals of Europe, would alone meet the case of this bird of sinister passage, but this unfortunately does not exist."

With respect to the other diplomatist, Rosebery, though he had long been assailed by the rumours in question, was not inclined to credit them :

"He thinks that the Ambassador having closed his garden to the public has given rise to these malicious reports. He may add that in spite of pertinacious enquiry on the subject he has never been able even to hear of anyone who has even seen the lady, the supposition of whose existence has caused so much searching of heart. He is inclined therefore, judiciously as well as benevolently, to doubt her being more than a phantom of local gossip."

In the very middle of the Egyptian excitements befell a domestic event of the sort that seems so trivial

to those who have not experienced it, so unforgettable to those who have—the boys' departure to their first school. Rosebery's private record of it reads thus :

January 20th.—"The little boys rather low. Neil got me to read *The Sick Stockrider* to him,—a poor consolation, as he had wept the last time I had read it. We dined all five together,—not cheerfully. Afterwards I walked to Bishopsgate and back, and saw old Rogers in bed."

January 21st.—"We all spent a miserable makeshift morning, but boys very brave. I made all the children write their name in my bible, (Harry for the first time as Dalmeny) and read John xiv. Then I went and bought the boys bibles, and frames to hold their parents' portraits. At last at 3.25 they went off. Shall I ever forget the cab with the precise initialled new luggage on the top ?

"To-day is the centenary of the execution of Louis XVI. I console myself by the incomparable anguish of the parting of Jan. 20, 1793.

"Before the Cabinet yesterday I sent the boys to Mr. Gladstone to ask for his blessing before going to school. It was a touching and beautiful sight. They, and I think he, deeply moved. Alas—five minutes afterwards he and I were hammer and tongs over Egypt."

He wrote to Lady Leconfield the same day :

"Within five minutes of the boys' going I received distracting telegrams. The strain on public grounds would have been very severe all this week, and I think the private strain has, so to speak, tugged me straight. When I am anxious abroad I think of my trouble at home and vice versâ, and like a whipping top am kept going by constant stripes."

Two days later, when he was seeing Mr. Gladstone on business :

"He spoke about the boys. Said he saw I was moved when he blessed them : 'I thought of the time when I first took Willie to school and cried like a child.'"¹

Have these simple emotions died out with the passing of Queen Victoria's reign ?

Mr. Gladstone, as has been noted, attached import-

¹ William Gladstone the younger had died in July 1891.

ance to Rosebery's leadership of the Lords; but Rosebery thought differently, and had written before Parliament met :

December 14th, 1892.—"As to the leadership of the Lords, I was clear in August that it should remain where it is; but I did not wish to trouble you more than, and so only communicated my views to my colleagues in the House of Lords, shewing that there were six months before us.

"Lord Salisbury indeed combined the Foreign Office with the leadership of the House of Lords. But, putting aside the intellectual disparity, there is a vast difference between leading a party of 500 peers and a party of 25. Were I well versed in the questions at issue I should rather enjoy this, but I am not, and should have laboriously to master them. Now I fear that night-work may bring me back to insomnia, and I can just get along without night-work or discreditable arrears under present circumstances. But if I were leader I could not. . . . I seem to have left you under the impression that I had agreed to lead; whereas I really went away under the impression that you would weigh my written objections at your leisure. Forgive this long story."

The result was that Lord Kimberley stayed on, and Rosebery attended his official dinner before the opening of Parliament. Thus during the session which opened on January 31st he confined himself mainly to departmental speeches, with a few exceptions, one of the first importance.

The Uganda squabble, which had so nearly closed Rosebery's career as Foreign Secretary, had been compromised by the dispatch as Commissioner of Sir Gerald Portal, whom Rosebery had observed in Egypt years before, to "endeavour to make British influence felt by the natives, to maintain peace and order, to develop legitimate trade . . . and generally to pave the way for conferring on the natives the benefits of civilisation which, on the suppression of the evils of the Slave Trade, should accompany the revival of prosperity." Portal was to have a considerable force of Zanzibari troops, and to be given as free a hand as possible.

This was on a fair way towards the establishment of the Protectorate which was announced in Parliament on April 12th. One cost of the expedition was the promising life of Sir Gerald Portal. Sir William Harcourt, his biographer tells us, had yielded to the arguments for settled control in that distracted region, and was immersed in his continual controversies with the spending departments. But he cannot have promulgated the Government policy in Parliament with much enthusiasm. On the other hand, Lord Salisbury gave it marked approval.

While the debate on the Address was in progress, Rosebery wrote to the Prime Minister :

" Pray forgive my writing a hint which I forgot to give this morning. Do not ignore Edward Grey, who is able and ready to speak if the discussion on foreign affairs goes on to-night."

It did continue, Labouchere having already violently assailed Rosebery at home and Captain Lugard¹ in Africa, and having encountered a crushing answer from the Prime Minister. Sir Edward Grey intervened in due course, and was complimented on his first appearance as spokesman for the Foreign Office.

Questions relating to Central Africa and the Congo (April 4th) did not flare up this year, but a letter to Sir Henry Ponsonby shows that the train was laid. The Queen thought that Sir E. Monson, her Minister at Brussels,² had not shown due consideration to the King of the Belgians. Rosebery replied :

" The fact is we have strong reasons for separating the King of the Belgians from the Sovereign of the Congo. The one is monarch of a guaranteed and friendly nation, the other is —"

" A pinch of fact is worth a bundle of epithet. The Sovereign of the Congo has sent a large filibustering force into the British sphere of influence, and it has occupied Lado,

¹ *B.* 1858. *Cr.* Lord Lugard 1928. G.C.M.G., etc.

² Sir Edmund Monson, Bart., G.C.B. (1834-1909). Minister at Athens 1888-92, and at Brussels 1892-3; Ambassador at Vienna 1893-6, and at Paris 1896-1904.

an important post on the Nile. The Sovereign of the Congo says he has no idea where the expeditionary force may be. It is the King of the Belgians then that has been in constant and notorious communication with them (for we know it as a fact). We can only regret that the separation of the function of the two sovereigns is so complete. . . . Possibly something of all this has percolated into Monson's manner, if so I am not surprised and cannot blame him.

"I will leave you to judge how much of all this you will communicate to the Queen."

In other communications to the Sovereign in the spring (March 29th) Rosebery tried to soothe the concern which she had expressed at the possible payment of Members of Parliament by saying that Mr. Gladstone was not in love with the proposal, and financial considerations would prevent its being "forthwith" carried into effect. But a grievance was felt, and—

"In himself, Lord Rosebery is well aware that it has not always worked well, and that it may probably lead to demands for payment by local bodies; but he is inclined in this as in much elsewhere to trust to the good sound common sense of the people of Great Britain.

"Mr. Labouchere has hitherto dealt tenderly with Lord Rosebery, leaf by leaf, like an artichoke. But he has now wearied of such untimely delicacy, and is moving to strike Lord Rosebery's official salary entirely off the estimates!"

The frontier between Siam and Cambodia, part of the Annamite Empire under French protection, was beginning to create some uneasiness. We were not concerned with the particular matter at issue; but it was the happy lot of the great European Powers to have no contiguous frontier in Asia, and any subjection of Siam by France might bring Indo-China into undesired proximity to Burmah and India. When the question was raised in the House of Lords (June 15th), Rosebery gave a guarded reply, pleading lack of information. A month later the same Peer, Lord Lamington, asked a further question,

and this time Rosebery read a written answer. The frontier question at the Mekong Valley was still unsettled, but the more serious matter of the ascent of the river Menam by two French gunboats was believed to have occurred against orders. British property at Bangkok was safeguarded by our ships, and the French declared themselves equally anxious to secure the integrity and independence of Siam. Later in the month Rosebery found the whole business weighing heavily on him, and for a moment it appeared extremely critical. It was important to know what the attitude of Italy and of Germany would be in the event of war with France. The German Government thought that Italy would respond to "the somewhat dramatic confidences" made to her, and would have to intervene. From Germany's own standpoint¹: "From the point of view of domestic politics, a war would not be undesirable if supported by public opinion. From the military point of view it is just as good now as later." Rosebery asked for a Cabinet on July 1st, telling Gladstone that the French persisted in their blockade in spite of the unconditional surrender of the Siamese to the French ultimatum, and that they had ordered our gunboats to leave Bangkok. The situation, therefore, was grave. Happily the rumour proved to be untrue. Rosebery had at once telegraphed that the vessels were to remain, which would have meant a collision, but the British officer commanding found that he had misunderstood the French Admiral. So the Cabinet was not called, and the incident closed. Harcourt, who had been abroad, wrote hearty congratulations to Rosebery on his settlement of the question. But Rosebery's opinion of the French proceedings was candidly given to the Queen at the height of the crisis:

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 26th, 1898.*

"Lord Rosebery with his humble duty returns his respectful thanks for Your Majesty's gracious letter and telegram.

¹ *German Diplomatic Documents 1871-1914*, vol. ii, pp. 288-40.

“He does not disguise from Your Majesty his belief that, if a note were presented at Paris saying that Your Majesty’s Government could not accept the position created by the Siamese cessions of territory, the French Government would yield ; more especially if that note were supported by a similar one from China. But there would be the chance of refusal, and a refusal would mean war. The two questions that Lord Rosebery has to ask himself are : would the Government run this risk, and would the House of Commons support them if they did ? To both these questions the answer would in his opinion be, undoubtedly, No.

“These questions and problems have been actively employing Lord Rosebery by night and by day ever since affairs have taken this acute turn. He would not shrink for a moment in staking his official existence on the risk he has mentioned, and he may yet have to do so. But the moment for that has not yet come, and, if it did, his retirement might not greatly further the solution of the difficulty.

“In all these questions it is of the first importance to distinguish the material from the immaterial. The behaviour of France to Siam has it appears been base, cruel and treacherous. Perhaps nothing so cynically vile is on record. But that is not our affair. We cannot afford to be the Knight Errant of the World, careering about to redress grievances and help the weak. If the French cut the throats of half Siam in cold blood we should not be justified in going to war with her. In all this matter we have only one prime interest, and, strangely enough, that interest is equally French. It is to keep a buffer between the French frontier and that of India, in order that a vast expenditure and danger may not be incurred by the immediate proximity of a great military power on our South-Eastern flank. If we can secure such an intermediate zone, state, or territory we shall have obtained all that Great Britain really requires. A short telegram just this moment received from Lord Dufferin gives some hope that this may be secured.

“Lord Rosebery fears that Your Majesty will think all this very cold blooded. He at any rate is not so. It makes his blood boil to read of the French proceedings. They invade and butcher the Siamese, and demand two-fifths of Siam for doing so. The Siamese indeed are not a very truthful or respectable race, but that is no excuse for treating them like vermin, and for behaving to them not with common honesty, but with uncommon dishonesty. We cannot how-

ever keep the police of the world : the Empire is a sufficient responsibility without that. The French must bear the burden of their own misdeeds, and Lord Rosebery does not doubt that as there is a God in heaven, these will find them out.

“Nor, with great deference, would Lord Rosebery wish to appeal to the Triple Alliance. It becomes Your Majesty’s dignity to settle this matter without such assistance. Resort to the Triple Alliance may some day be necessary, and no doubt the French are trying their best to drive us to it : but this should be in some direr strait than the present.

“Lord Rosebery begs that Your Majesty will excuse this tedious but very secret rigmarole.”

Rosebery’s verdict that nothing so cynically vile as the conduct of the French was on record is Gladstonian in its vehemence. Perhaps it goes somewhat far, if one were to examine the history of European expansion in Asia and Africa by the Great Powers. But Rosebery’s experience at the Foreign Office had bred in him deep distrust of the French policy of those days outside Europe. Nor was he by any means alone in so thinking.

Apart from these grave affairs, the Foreign Office was not greatly harassed this year. Armenian Christians were being tried at Angora (then an unfamiliar name), and the Archbishop of Canterbury pleaded for them. Rosebery was able to show that his intervention had secured banishment instead of death as the fate of the chief ecclesiastics, and if the trial of the other prisoners proved to be the mere mockery that theirs had been, he would make the same representations.

He was also able to show that he was keeping a vigilant eye on Persia and the Persian Gulf.

Mr. Gladstone had said that the result of the General Election smote him under the fifth rib ; but Home Rulers were in a majority and to drop the subject was impossible. Rosebery, as we have seen, was a bearer of the thyrsus, but did not boast the Bacchic inspiration. Neither he nor Harcourt formed part of the

Cabinet Committee of six whose task it was to frame a measure better balanced and more acceptable than the Bill of 1886. The Queen had somehow persuaded herself that Rosebery, chained to his chair at the Foreign Office, was little more than nominally adherent to Gladstone's Irish policy, and did not scruple to confide to him the dislike and dread with which she contemplated it. His acknowledgment must be given in full, for it exactly presents his candid opinion :

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 9th, 1893.*

"Lord Rosebery with his humble duty begs to express the feelings of pleasure and gratitude with which he has received Your Majesty's gracious letter, and the expression of confidence contained in it.

"It is however for reasons which are sufficiently obvious, not very easy for him to discuss the topic on which Your Majesty dwells.

"He is not an enthusiastic Home Ruler, in the sense of believing that it is a certain panacea for the secular ills of Ireland ; nor would he pursue that remedy to the length of civil war, for of course it would then be worse than the disease it is designed to cure. But he regards it as on the whole the most practicable or least impracticable method of governing that country, and, indeed, until it shall have been tried, he knows of no alternative : for he believes that were the hope of Home Rule to be removed the latent forces of anarchy and revolution would break out with renewed horror.

"He considers therefore that the Government have no choice but to go on with their measure, to which they are pledged in honour, and which a majority of the House of Commons supports. It will no doubt be rejected by the House of Lords, and the result of that rejection remains to be seen. Lord Rosebery will utter no forecast with regard to it. But, in the meantime, by the unwritten laws of politics and of the existence of Governments, the bill must inevitably proceed through the House of Commons. There is indeed no choice in the matter.

"Lord Rosebery deploras Your Majesty's misgivings and distress, the more so as he can fully enter into Your Majesty's point of view. But even should the Home Rule Bill be as

full of danger as Your Majesty believes, Your Majesty can surely place sufficient confidence in the robust common sense and overwhelming power of Great Britain to be certain that the ultimate result cannot be disaster. Lord Rosebery's own prognostications are of course much more sanguine, though falling short of course of the hopes entertained by some of his colleagues. Indeed he is not sure that he does not consider the London County Council a more portentous circumstance than an Irish Local legislature.

"Should Your Majesty care to see Lord Rosebery, or could it be the least relief for Your Majesty to discuss this subject with a devoted servant, he would leave for Balmoral on Wednesday, June 14, as was originally proposed."

After its laboured transit through the House of Commons, the unheard-of vigour with which the champion of eighty-four fought its battle, and its final passage by a majority of 34,—impossibly puny for a great constitutional change,—the measure reached the House of Lords. It was not debated there until September 5th, when Lord Spencer moved the second reading of the doomed Bill and the Duke of Devonshire its rejection. Four days of debate concluded by a vote of 419 against a poor 41 in favour of Home Rule. All the principal orators in the House, and some others not exactly orators, took part.

Nearly forty years have passed, and Ireland, then governed in practice as a Crown Colony,¹ has become a self-governing Dominion. So the interest of the discussion is now purely historical. Rosebery spoke at length on the third day, following a powerful speech from a former pillar of the Gladstone Government, Lord Selborne. The unreality of the present discussion was Rosebery's first comment. Then he turned to the Duke of Argyll, who had quoted from his *Pitt* some observations on the Union, and called him the victim of the fatal and malignant disease, *lues Gladstoniana*. Lord Londonderry, on the other

¹ The presence of Irish members in the House of Commons did not really contradict this, highly inconvenient as they could make themselves there.

hand, with his mass of quotations, was a sufferer from *morbus Spenceranus*.

He himself would not discuss details, because the point at issue was far larger than any Bill. The debate would be elevated by making it a discussion on policy; the two parties disagreed on the method of governing and conciliating Ireland. He did not pretend to be certain, but he had reached the convictions he held in the teeth of almost all that would tend to make him take the other side. In the House of Commons the Tory party had voted recklessly for incompatible amendments, as it seemed in order to bring Parliamentary institutions into contempt. But in the Lords their responsibility was tenfold greater. It would be a standing reproach to Lord Salisbury that in six years of office he had made no attempt to reform the House. An Irish Peer had said that he knew all about Ireland; but that was not the question—Did Ireland know about him? Did he represent Ireland in any shape or form? Passing from that, he had sometimes felt that the Irish Question would be settled by an agreement between the two political parties. The Liberal Unionists at any rate had admitted that Home Rule was merely a question of degree. If, instead of rejecting the Bill, they had defined their policy by moving amendments, the final issue would have been a conference of the two Houses, which might have led to a fruitful result. He proceeded in the tone of his letter to the Queen to describe himself as a witness, but not an enthusiastic witness, in favour of Home Rule. With him it was not a fanaticism, but a question of policy alone. He touched upon the Tory abandonment of coercion in 1885, and asked how Austria could have held Venice if every four or five years a party had announced that it would drop coercion. Again, there could be no equal devolution in the countries of the United Kingdom, though at first he had hoped there might be. But what policy, what scheme had the Opposition in view? When they were in power

Irish business still consumed as much parliamentary time as before : " Whether you plaster Ireland with your garrisons or with your gold, the end of it by some devious path or other will be only some form of Home Rule." It, the Bill, was an experiment, but so had been the establishment of the London County Council and the Reform Act of 1867. This Bill was not, like that, a " leap in the dark," but a leap towards the light.

Lord Balfour of Burleigh, who followed, said that the speech was full of chaff, but not of argument : Lord Halsbury, the next day, regarded it as an exhibition of tactics and diplomacy. Lord Salisbury, in winding up the debate for his side, said that Rosebery—

" did what I often observed in speakers with a singular facility for the lighter and more humorous kinds of speech. He took refuge in that in order to save himself from the necessity of expressing a grave opinion on any grave subject whatever . . . it seemed to me that the problem which he set himself to solve was ' How shall I get through an hour-and-a-quarter's speech without undertaking any pledge which may be inconvenient to me in the future ? ' "

This was hardly fair, as Lord Kimberley in conclusion pointed out :

" My noble friend the Foreign Secretary is like one of those actors who possess in the highest degree both a tragic and comic vein, and if he commenced with a number of witty observations which I am sure delighted the House, he did not forget to turn in the latter part of his speech to the graver aspect of the subject. I do not think it possible that any more impressive appeal could have been addressed to this House than that of my noble friend on the general policy of the question."

Rosebery's private comment was :

" Ill prepared, and by an unlucky muddle thought I had been speaking two hours instead of one. This made me omit some important arguments, and disturbed the balance

of the speech. Went home profoundly disgusted with myself. But some people were pleased."

Francis Horner wrote in 1809 that no legislative measure had ever been carried against prejudices that was not prosecuted with as much ardour as if it were expected to prove a very panacea—though none could with truth be so proposed. He was not far wrong, as the later history of the nineteenth century showed; but Rosebery did not think Home Rule a panacea, as he had told the Queen, and was not prepared to say that it was. But he was not a bad prophet of the methods whereby the Home Rule ship would at last be brought to harbour.

Hard driven, but not over-driven, by his Foreign Office duties, Rosebery found it possible to appear this summer on several uncontentious fields. He presided at the twenty-fifth banquet of the Royal Colonial Institute (March 2nd). His office, he pointed out, was concerned almost daily with colonial questions, such as frontier delimitations. He repeated his conviction that in frequent Imperial conferences would be found the solution of "what was called Imperial Federation." Some thought the Empire large enough, but it was part of our responsibility that some of the undeveloped regions of the world should receive the Anglo-Saxon character.

More congenial still was the stone-laying ceremony at the Bishopsgate Institute (May 15th). Canon Rogers, said Rosebery, had been a civilising agency for thirty or forty years. He had lately (and here, surely, was a touch of *malice*) preached a sermon on "Can these dry bones live?" and life was being breathed into the dry bones of the City charities. He hoped the Institute would provide innocent enjoyment, because the thesis that life could be reduced to a Blue Book for mental and a biscuit for physical nourishment did not stand the test of time or experience.

He next opened the new Town Hall at Battersea



By kind permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

THE HANDY BOY!

The Missis : I knew you had plenty to do, Primrose, but I was quite sure you wouldn't mind taking up those coals ! "

(November 15th), with a cordial speech on municipal institutions and the new-born pride of Londoners in London. He spoke at the Royal Academy banquet (June 25th), and at the Trinity House, where he had a bantering match with Sir William Harcourt, but, like the other speakers, turned gravely to the naval calamity which had just stricken the nation in the loss of the *Victoria* and Admiral Tryon.

Two other Imperial occasions were a paper read by Lord Onslow at the Colonial Institute (November 14th) on State Socialism in Australasia, and a dinner at the Imperial Institute (November 16th) to an old friend, Lord Elgin, on his appointment as Viceroy of India. But these were *parerga*. He was entrusted by the Cabinet with the chairmanship of the Conference between Federated Coal-owners and the Miners' Federation on the dispute which had brought about a general strike in the industry. It met at the Foreign Office on November 17th. The Chairman's account tells the story :

"One of the most anxious and happiest days of my life. The Coal Conference assembled at 11 and rose at 5.20 having come to a treaty of peace.

"I gave a plain luncheon. Afterwards the masters retired to discuss a proposition of mine, and remained away fully two hours. The men were away, later, and for about twenty minutes.

"Dined alone, very tired. But it would have been a good day to die on."

The terms included the creation of a Board of Conciliation composed of fourteen representatives of each side, with a neutral chairman, to meet in a month's time. The Board to have power to determine the rate of wages as from February 1st, 1894. The men to resume work at the old rates till that date.

It had been an overwhelming week, with great pressure at the Foreign Office, the outside engagements that have been mentioned, and new private

cares from the default in money matters of a financial agent of the highest personal connections in London.

Rosebery had been tied to London for most of the year. He had snatched an odd day or two at Newmarket, but had seen little racing, except for going for the day to Ascot with the Prince of Wales, where he saw his *Illuminata* two-year-old, destined to make history the following year, win the Coventry Stakes in a canter. His visits to Osborne and Windsor were chiefly official; but at one audience the talk was on languages, when the Queen said that she had never had any difficulty with French, in spite of Rosebery's urging the niceties and difficulties of the language,¹ but that she always had her German letters overhauled before they went.²

During a week at Balmoral in September Rosebery met the Empress Eugénie, the Grand Duke and Duchess Serge, and other magnates. Once he went out deerstalking, an unusual enterprise for him, but he "never saw a horn."

Before Lord Elgin was selected for the Indian Viceroyalty the post had seemed difficult to fill:

"Kimberley came in something like despair about a Viceroy. I said, 'You know, if I am fit, and if there is no one else, I would go, rather than see the place jobbed away.' K. 'Nonsense, if you go, the Government will go too.' I. 'Then let us all take cabins.'"

Rosebery's only other absence was a spell of three weeks at Homburg, by the doctor's orders. Royal personages were as thick as peas, but Rosebery made solitary expeditions to the curiosity shop at Frankfort, where he was guilty, as he said, of "sad extravagance." External repairs and alterations were

¹ An illustrious French lady told me that she had never heard her language spoken with such exquisite precision as in a conversation between the Queen and the Duc d'Aumale at which she had been present.

² This demonstrates the untruth of the prevalent story, which gave much annoyance to the Royal Family, that the Queen made frequent use of the German language at home.

going on at his house in Berkeley Square, which needed remodelling from top to bottom.

At the very opening of the new year an alarm sounded over the Navy estimates. During the autumn of 1893 an animated correspondence, adorned with much warm language, had passed between Sir William Harcourt and the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Spencer, and the naval situation had been angrily debated in Parliament. The opposition of the Treasury was to be anticipated, but when the Prime Minister took up the cudgels the matter became serious. At the end of the previous year Rosebery had done his best to persuade the Prime Minister that some increase of the fleet was reasonable :

Confidential. FOREIGN OFFICE, December 18th, 1893, 11.30 p.m.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"I will not trouble your eyes with many words. But if, as I think possible from your letter to-day, you are prepared to fall in with the general anxiety for the increase of our fleet, I would most earnestly urge you to let this be plainly evident in your speech to-morrow, and I do this on the sole ground of the interests of peace.

"Prevention is better than cure, and I firmly believe that the spontaneous expenditure of a few millions now may prevent the compulsory expenditure of many hundred millions later. And, as the effect of this immediate expenditure is ever more moral than physical, I lay the greatest stress on an early intimation—not necessarily to commit or forestall the Cabinet—but to prevent vain delusions being nourished on the Continent. If we are to spend the money let us get our money's worth : and half the worth will lie in the promptitude of the announcement that we are ready to spend it.

"Forgive this brief intrusion, but I feel on this subject more deeply and strongly than I express, or can express.

"Y. affly.,
"AR."

Ten days later he wrote :

"I would beg you to remember that what I wrote to you on the eve of the Navy debate applies to all questions of

European policy. Europe is in a parlous state, and any words that may intimate a weakening of our position may have a far-reaching effect. A single sentence in your Navy Speech of the kind I begged for would have had an incalculable value for peace. But that word was not spoken, and the opportunity is gone. Only do not let us now give any idea that we do not stand where we did last February, or we may revive forces and passions that we should find it difficult to control.

"Forgive the heartfelt earnestness of these words; dictated as they are by a pervading sense of the gravity of the situation.

"Y. affly.,
"AR."

Mr. Gladstone indeed went farther than Harcourt, who thought that they must make the best of a bad job and accept the estimates, little as he approved them. It was reported that he followed the Prime Minister into his room at the House of Commons, in spite of the warning, "I really cannot discuss this matter with you."

January 3rd.—"Harcourt however persisted, and had a terrible interview, denouncing Spencer (as Mr. G. says), speaking with extreme bitterness to Mr. G. himself, according to Harcourt. Mr. G. seems to have practically ordered him out of the room. Spencer this afternoon low and tired. He wanted me to go and see Mr. G. Harcourt, who followed, said that would be fatal, but urged me to go and see Mrs. G."

The Queen had naturally from the first taken the part of the Admiralty, and had hoped that Rosebery would support Lord Spencer. In the autumn Rosebery had written (November 15th, 1893):

"With respect to the Navy Lord Rosebery shares Your Majesty's feelings in the fullest degree, though of course in *The Times* articles—as is right for the purpose aimed at—the shadows of the picture are laid on too lavishly.

"Lord Rosebery is in reality more interested in this matter than any of Your Majesty's Ministers, for the author-

ity and weight of the Foreign Office suffer obvious diminution when the Navy is suspected of weakness and are perhaps impaired by that suspicion at this moment.

"Lord Rosebery therefore viewed with pleasure the utterances at Manchester on this subject of so strong a Cobdenite as Mr. John Morley.

"Lord Rosebery hopes he need not assure Your Majesty that he has already given Lord Spencer promises of the most earnest support, and has frequently urged the paramount importance of the question. But the initiative in the Cabinet and elsewhere must come from Lord Spencer."

A day or two later, at Windsor, the Queen recurred to the question, saying that the Navy must be increased :

"I agreed. She added 'And the Army,' or something to that effect. When I was doubtful, she said 'Ah, I cannot agree. I was brought up so to speak with the feeling for the Army,—being a soldier's daughter,—and not caring about being on the sea I have always had a special feeling for the Army.'"

Colloquies proceeded daily between colleagues. Rosebery was in continual conference with Morley, Spencer, Asquith, and Edward Marjoribanks. On the 10th he saw the Prime Minister, who said, "The dead are with me." The differences were so far patched up that Mr. Gladstone went to Biarritz for a month, but from there came news that he had said to Sir Algernon West¹: "You might as well try and blow up the Rock of Gibraltar with your own hands as try to move me."

For a short time Rosebery was crippled by a strained ligament. Soon after his recovery came the announcement that Gladstone, sending a message like Tiberius from his island, proposed an instant dissolution of Parliament. Half a dozen of the principal Ministers met, and not one would entertain the proposition. The Prime Minister returned and gave a

¹ (1832–1921.) Private Secretary to Mr. Gladstone 1868–73. Chairman Board of Inland Revenue 1881–92.

Cabinet dinner on February 17th. Rosebery, seated on the host's left, noted :

"When dinner was over I said to him, 'If any secret matters are going to be discussed we ought to look to the doors.' 'Certainly,' replied Mr. G. airily, 'if anybody has any topic to raise it might be done now.' This was all that passed."

A week later at a Cabinet the Prime Minister uttered a few vague words as to the time when his co-operation with the Cabinet would cease, but no one said anything. The final scene came on March 1st. It is depicted in the *Life of Gladstone* with the emotion of a faithful follower parting from a glorious chief. Rosebery, not less moved at heart, described it for himself in a different tone :

"Kimberley said three words of adieu and broke down. Harcourt burst into sobs before beginning, and then read his own pompous letter to Mr. G. A horrid scene."

Rosebery had written his own adieu a few days earlier :

Secret.

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 24th, 1894.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"I cannot forbear writing you a few words, and the bitter thought is that they may be the last that I shall address to you as a colleague. For, though you have never told the Cabinet expressly or in terms, I can scarcely doubt after what you said yesterday that it is your intention to retire from office in the forthcoming week.

"Since I entered Parliament I have always been your follower. Since 1879 I have been more closely and personally attached to you. And though there have been differences, and are, there are many fewer than might have been anticipated in view of the difference in age and conditions. We have seen, if I may say so, glorious days together—the recollection of which still stirs my blood—you as chief and I as esquire. And now all is passing or past, and it is a moment of anguish,—to all your colleagues I believe,—most certainly to me.

"I fear that the present, but I hope temporary, condition of your eyesight gives you only too good a reason for resignation. But it would be affectation to deny that there is also a difference of opinion;—opinion perhaps is too weak a word, for with me it is a matter of faith. In this one point at any rate we are agreed—that it involves the peace of the world. Unfortunately we are at the two poles asunder as regards the means.

"On this point I could say much. I have held aloof of late—partly because I could not bring myself to believe in your intention, much more because it is painful to be in a relation of acute difference on so vital a point. Nor do I believe for a moment that anything I could say would change your views, for I am no more your equal in argument than in anything else. But I could at least convince you that from my point of view my policy is not less than yours founded on peace and not on oppression.

"It is hard to be thus parted; and once more I deeply regret that you did not leave me, as I so ardently wished, in my retirement. But whatever happens you cannot change my present feeling to yourself. Good-bye is a hard saying:—hard at all times, but scarcely tolerable when I think of what you are and have always been to me, of the old Midlothian days, of the times of storm and sunshine in which I have stood by your side, and, above all, of the time to come, when that may not be.

"Y. affectionately,
"AR."

Gladstone's last audience was at Windsor on March 3rd, and it afterwards was known that, had his opinion been invited, he would have suggested Spencer as his successor. He had no prejudice against a Peer as Prime Minister; and when I was at Hawarden in the winter he indicated that the best man for the place would probably be found in the House of Lords.

It can only be assumed that his experience had convinced him, as it had the rest of the Cabinet without exception, that Sir William Harcourt's unquestionable claims to the succession were overborne by paramount objections. A later generation was puzzled by all this. That a man so genial, so humorous, so thoroughly kind-hearted, should be an

impossible colleague was a mystery to those who had never served with him. But so it was.¹ The 15th Lord Derby, the least excitable of men, had found him so when he joined the Government in 1882. Campbell-Bannerman could get on with anybody, but he had been bullied over his Army estimates and, as I knew at the time, did not want to see Harcourt ruling at No. 10 Downing Street. John Morley's attitude, as Harcourt's biographer observes,² needs more explaining, and the reasons suggested by him seem to me entirely correct. Harcourt's lukewarmness on Home Rule went for something; but his roughness and sharp tongue for a great deal more. It is all very well to say that after his frequent rows he forgot all about them, and bore no malice; but since his colleagues were peaceable people and the provocation invariably came from him, they were apt to remember what form the rows took: "*si rixa est, ubi tu pulsas, ego vapulo tantum.*" But perhaps they were all wrong. Difficult characters are sometimes mellowed by success to an extraordinary degree. As president of the Cabinet he might have sought for harmony, and not have engaged in perpetual protest. Lewis Harcourt, too, might have employed his skill in making things go well instead of going awry. Still, so far as the Foreign Office was concerned, a Harcourt premiership could not have been peaceful. The causes for friction which in fact ensued would have been the same, and the resignations which bade fair to break up the party might have happened before the Government fell, instead of afterwards.

There was no other possible Prime Minister in the House of Commons. Either Kimberley or Spencer ranked as *papabile*, but either was willing to serve

¹ I had the benefit of an old family friendship, and always received every kindness from Sir William Harcourt. We were amazed at the legends of his early unpopularity, such as the famous, and obviously untrue, one that three men agreed to make up a dinner of six at a club by each asking the most unpopular person of his acquaintance, and that only four covers were laid, for all three had invited William Harcourt.

² Vol. ii, p. 264.

under Rosebery, for whom it was assumed that the Queen would send. Conversations had started even before the last Gladstone Cabinet.

February 25th.—"Asquith came. He and C. Bannerman had been listening to Marjoribanks. He had been summoned to Harcourt yesterday to listen to a long memorandum. It set forth that the P.M. should be in the H. of C. But that he if it were the general wish would lead the H. of C. under conditions : 1. that he should take independent decisions in the House ; 2. that he should see all F.O. despatches ; 3. that he should have some control of patronage ; and another which I forget.¹

"I remarked that it might be difficult to serve under Harcourt, but that it would be still more difficult to serve over him. Marjoribanks also said that there was a growing feeling in the H. of C. against a peer. I said I was delighted to hear it.—Might it grow ! Asquith and Campbell-Bannerman came to see me. Both, I could see, much disquieted by E. Marjoribanks' tidings."

¹ This was the understanding that a Cabinet should be called at his request.

CHAPTER XV

PRIME MINISTER, 1894

ON the day after the farewell Cabinet the Prince of Wales sent for Rosebery and gave him a message from the Queen, that she hoped he would stand by her in the difficulty in which she was placed. On the next afternoon (March 3rd) Sir Henry Ponsonby brought a letter from her appealing to him on behalf of herself and the Government to form an administration. Later in the day he saw Harcourt, who left a long account of this interview and of one which took place on the following morning.¹

Rosebery, in writing to accept office, had told the Queen of the difficulties ahead of him. He would renounce the undertaking rather than not submit the name of the best successor to himself at the Foreign Office. He felt deeply, too, the prospect of finding himself in acute conflict with some of the Queen's views. He also wrote to Sir Henry Ponsonby (March 4th) :

“ Things are not going very well. One or two of my colleagues in the Commons are endeavouring to impose conditions upon me—one of which is that the new Foreign Minister shall be in the House of Commons. I have refused to submit to any conditions not ordinarily imposed on a Prime Minister. I don't want to be Prime Minister at all, but if I am to be, I must be a real one. I have told them that if this condition is pressed I will throw up my commission at once. That is how matters stand. Of course, all this is for the Queen, but I prefer to tell her informally through you.”

In answer to his personal letter the Queen wrote :

¹ This is printed at length in the *Life of Sir William Harcourt*, vol. ii, pp. 271-2.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *March 4th*, 1894.

"The Queen thanks Lord Rosebery for his kind confidential letter.

"She is sorry to hear that he apprehends any trouble which might alienate him from her. The Queen can hardly think this possible, or at any rate probable.

"She does not object to Liberal measures which are not revolutionary & she does not think it possible that Lord Rosebery will destroy well tried, valued & necessary institutions for the sole purpose of flattering useless Radicals or pandering to the pride of those whose only desire is their own self-gratification."

Meanwhile John Morley had suggested becoming President of the Council, but was induced to remain Irish Secretary. He may have hoped for the Foreign Office; and if the very tart entry in Lewis Harcourt's journal is to be considered accurate,¹ he was in a state of acute discontent. He dined alone with Rosebery on the 4th, but it is recorded the next day:

"A small conference of 5 at 11.30. Harcourt sulky. Morley went off in a huff. No more conferences."

That afternoon he kissed hands as Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury, saying farewell to the Foreign Office. He did not enter light-heartedly on his task. The morning before he had been at 8.30 to Communion in Down Street—"the church at which I was married." Thoughts of his life of the past, and of the life of the future, were a help in the present hour of triumph chequered by doubts and regrets. On the following Sunday at Epsom his friend and Vicar, Canon Hunter, asked the congregation to remember in their prayers "our neighbour the Prime Minister."

Not long after, he wrote to Arthur Godley²:

"I am very grateful for your kind note. Your letters always have a stamp about them which no others quite

¹ *Life*, vol. ii, p. 269.

² *b.* 1847. Private Secretary to Mr. Gladstone 1872-4 and 1880-2. Permanent Under-Secretary for India 1883-1909. G.C.B. *Cr.* Lord Kilbracken 1909.

possess. I am very homesick for the Foreign Office, and I do not think I shall like any of the duties of my new position. Patronage is odious : ecclesiastical patronage distressing. It is in consequence, indeed, of a Dean having died that I dictate this from my bed."

The first Cabinet was held at the Foreign Office on March 8th.

The difficulty arising from the choice of Kimberley as Foreign Secretary was not composed until two days later. On the 12th he went from the Durdans—"a terrible day." It opened with a party meeting at the Foreign Office, and this passed off well. Rosebery declared, "We stand where we did. There is no change in measures,—there is only a most disastrous change in men." The question of the Welsh Church was to be dealt with promptly, and to the Irish Question they were bound by every tie of honour and of policy. The presence of Morley as Chief Secretary was a guarantee of that. He spoke firmly against the pretensions of the House of Lords, and in conclusion asked to be judged not by his words but by his acts. Harcourt followed with a speech in his best vein.

It was by Rosebery's words that he was destined to be judged later the same day, when, after having taken his seat at the Treasury Bench, he attended the debate on the Queen's Speech in the House of Lords. There Lord Salisbury assured him of the heartiest welcome from the majority of the House, and went on to point out that Home Rule was now in suspense, that the issue depended on its acceptance by England, and that its decision should be asked at once. When Rosebery, after touching on Gladstone's retirement and on foreign and domestic affairs, came to Ireland, he followed the Tory leader's argument with needless fidelity :

"The noble Marquess made one remark on Irish Home Rule with which I confess myself in entire accord. He said that before Irish Home Rule is concluded by the Imperial Parliament, England as the predominant member of the

partnership of the Three Kingdoms will have to be convinced of its justice and equity."

He went on to express the assurance that this conversion would be neither slow nor difficult, and that Ireland would prove herself entitled to the boon. At this distance of time, after all the unforeseen events of forty years, the excitement aroused by these phrases seems surprising. *The Times* declared that Rosebery had at one blow shattered the fabric of Liberal policy. As Rosebery observed later at Edinburgh (March 19th), the statement was a platitude in the sense in which he uttered it. Clearly a Home Rule Bill would never be carried without more English votes. But as a Scotsman he repudiated the doctrine that every measure must be approved by England before it could be passed.

Still, the expression was unhappily used at the particular moment. As the French thinker puts it, "*Toute vérité nue et crue n'a pas assez passé par l'âme.*" Except as an element in Imperial Federation, Irish Home Rule was not for Rosebery a thing to move the soul, but to convince the head.

Punishment was not tardy. On the following evening (March 13th):

"At 10 Campbell-Bannerman came to announce that the Government had been beaten at 8,—by Labouchere and by two!"

The debate on the Address in the Commons had been carried on by Randolph Churchill, who maintained that the famous phrase was only used to lull the fears of Unionists; John Morley made a gallant defence of it; John Redmond denounced Rosebery in unmeasured terms; Joseph Chamberlain was sarcastic; and Labouchere proposed his amendment practically abolishing the powers of the Upper House. Its success in a House of under three hundred of course proved nothing; but it had the effect of

making the Government look ridiculous, and reflected cruelly on its head.

An address from the Progressive majority of the County Council at St. James's Hall brought together a great band of Peers, Members of Parliament, and citizens. Whoever might be faithless, London was faithful; and the welcome was to the Councillor for East Finsbury no less than to the Prime Minister. In reply, he praised the salvation from building of a thousand acres of land, and the wise labour policy of the Council, and passed on to a general survey of the social progress made under the Liberal Government. The new Home Secretary, Asquith, loudly called on, said that the creed of the Liberal party had been proclaimed by the one man who had authority to do so.

The Prime Minister's work, though continuous and often harassing, does not involve the fixed hours and the daily drudgery of a great department, and Rosebery was occasionally able to enjoy the marvellous spring weather at the Durdans, and once or twice to spend a night at Newmarket. High hopes were beginning to centre on the *Illuminata* colt, now named *Ladas*—after the unlucky purchase of Oxford days—with a defiance of luck which made gamblers shake their heads.

It will be remembered that the Uganda difference had been composed for the moment by the dispatch of Sir Gerald Portal as Commissioner. But there was no real agreement between Harcourt and Morley on the one side and Rosebery and Kimberley on the other, not merely on this question but on all those affecting African colonisation. The two former and their supporters thought that the Empire was as large as it ought to be, and apparently would have been content if the whole continent of Africa, except Cape Colony and Natal, had fallen under foreign influence and control. Sir William Harcourt had imbibed much wisdom at the feet of Sir George Cornwall Lewis, but he may not have seen that what was true in the

'fifties might not be equally true in the 'nineties. As his biographer tells us, he was proud of being a Little Englander in one sense ; but he seems to have supposed that this country, while avoiding much contact with the Great Powers of Europe, could exercise, by possessing the strongest navy, a controlling influence over European politics in case of need.

In a Cabinet system it is an advantage to a Minister to have served as subordinate or chief in an office outside the run of his ordinary interests. Harcourt had plenty of knowledge of the outer world. This he showed not only as *Historicus*, but in many speeches and addresses. But he would have gained by serving at the Admiralty or in the Colonial Office. To him his opponents were all Jingoës of the worst sort. This, needless to say, was a complete injustice to Rosebery and Kimberley, who were no more Jingoës than Lord Salisbury was. But Rosebery doubtless held that certain elements in the problem were changing rapidly. The awakened consciousness of our own Colonies, joined to the eager creation of great colonial Empires by France and Germany ; the possibility of mitigating the grouping of Powers into alliances by inducing all to combine in the Concert of Europe—these, it seemed to him, made impossible that aloofness from the affairs of the Continent which even the United States, not themselves of it, have found impossible to maintain.

The question of the Upper Nile was nearly connected with the retention of our influence in Uganda and with the possibility of our complete withdrawal from Egypt. A complication arose over the proposal to transfer to the King of the Belgians (and Congo) our sphere of influence on the Upper Nile on a long lease. Kimberley wrote to Rosebery on March 27th : " Ought we not to let Harcourt know of these negotiations ? He ought not to kick at it as it really tends to narrow our responsibilities." This was done at once, but Harcourt made no comment until April 22nd, when he wrote one of his dictatorial letters of

protest, accusing the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister of transacting foreign affairs in the House of Lords and of taking particular care that he should know nothing of them. Through the spring and summer constant communications passed between Kimberley and Rosebery, the former sometimes narrating Harcourt's arrival at the Foreign Office in a worse temper than usual. Germany demurred to one of the most important articles in the Agreement. The French objected on the curious ground that part of the territories affected belonged to the Ottoman Empire—which had no more control of them than had the Empire of China. Rosebery jumped at the contention, and drafted a memorandum (June 17th) declaring that the Nile is Egypt and Egypt is the Nile, and that as the occupying power our first interest was to obtain a recognition of this principle by the Great Powers. A conference should be proposed in which with the support of Germany we should get our sphere of influence defined. A protocol to be added that whenever Egypt is in a position to re-occupy it we should with pleasure hand over to her that part which is at present under our control. France, he believed, desired a conference, and the real object of the Anglo-Congolese Agreement would thus be attained.

He wrote to the Queen (June 13th):

“The Anglo-Congolese agreement is causing disproportionate excitement; in France, because France had endeavoured to do the same thing, and had failed; in Germany, from jealousy and an anxiety to obtain compensation for acquiescence.”

And the following day (June 14th):

“He sent for Count Deym and held language to that Ambassador¹ which will ricochet through Vienna to Berlin.

“He told Count Deym that the style of the German note, though not unusual in communications from Berlin, was

¹ Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in London.

insufferable, and that if Germany were going to side with France or appear to side with France in this or other African questions, we must reconsider our position as regards our general attitude in Europe, more particularly in the Mediterranean and the East.

“Lord Rosebery would humbly suggest that, should the time come for Your Majesty to write to the Emperor, it should be pointed out that Germany is playing an extremely dangerous game. She is alienating this country, and instead of making friendly remonstrances and proposals for reconsideration she takes a tone which she might properly use in addressing Monaco. Moreover she is encouraging France to bully Belgium. It is never wise to fan a French flame, and Belgium might easily become the cause as well as the scene of a European conflagration. Should the French come in contact with British or Belgian posts in Africa, whether the conflict were slight or not, British or Belgian blood would be shed, and a war might easily ensue. From such a war Germany could not hold aloof, and it is thus difficult to see the motive of her policy.”

In the event, the objection of Germany and France prevailed, and the King of the Belgians asked that the agreement should be abandoned, to the supreme joy of its opponents in the Cabinet.

Uganda remained as a bone of contention. On June 1st Lord Stanmore, Rosebery's old friend of Ceylon days, moved for papers, and a debate followed. After Lord Kimberley had replied on the religious disturbances and other local matters, Lord Salisbury uttered a powerful plea for immediate consideration, if not immediate construction of the railway from the coast. One reason, he argued, was the opening up of new sources of consumption, which, unlike other countries, we leave all others as free to use for commerce as we do ourselves. Rosebery replied with general agreement, but ardour for the railway must be combined with general discretion. We had to make great sacrifices to maintain our naval position, which was more important to the interests of the Empire than a hundred Ugandas. It might have been wiser to construct a line of telegraph at

once, and the question of the railway was one for mature judgment.

In fact, however, things had gone farther. On the previous day Rosebery had noted at the Cabinet, "Delicate and critical topics handled with creditable moderation," though it was nearly a year before the railway was actually sanctioned.

In April trouble arose over the treatment of British subjects in Nicaragua, and the exequaturs of both British and United States Consuls were withdrawn, though afterwards restored. Kimberley thought the main point was to avoid ruffling the susceptibilities of the United States. Later the question of coercing the recalcitrant little state, in the absence of explanations from her, had to be considered. "A pacific blockade" was suggested—rather a *brutum fulmen*, it was thought. Rosebery preferred making preparations to making an immediate decision, and inclined to the seizure of customs if necessary. In October, no step having been taken, Rosebery protested to the Foreign Office against ignoring the United States. He did not know that they had shown much jealousy of us in recent Mosquito affairs¹ and would like to say to them, "Your citizens have been seized and arbitrarily imprisoned like ours. Would you be disposed to take joint action to demand reparations? We must take such action and we should prefer to act with you to show that we have no wish for a separate position or advantage in Mosquitia." The matter dragged on into the spring of the following year. Harcourt thought that damages should be settled by arbitration,² but to this Kimberley strongly demurred. Harcourt also complained that "Lord Rosebery" had not consulted him or summoned a Cabinet.³

¹ The implications of the Monroe Doctrine had not then been extended to such cases. At this time the Indians in the Mosquito Reserve claimed British protection.

² *Life*, vol. ii, pp. 330–31.

³ Sir William Harcourt was mistaken (letter to Kimberley, April 18th) in thinking that the Foreign Secretary had asked for a Cabinet and been refused. The Cabinet had been offered and not required.

The American Minister, Mr. Bayard, thought that we were entitled to demand redress, and French opinion took the same view. In May 1895 some ships were sent, and Nicaragua complied with the British demand.

The attitude of the House of Lords, in its unreformed state, towards the Liberal party was a perpetual anxiety to Rosebery, and his manner of encountering it brought him for the first and only time into direct collision with his Royal Mistress. The whole episode is delineated in *The Letters of Queen Victoria* more completely than is possible here; but Rosebery was so greatly affected by his necessary part in it that it cannot be passed over, even with the repetition of some facts and documents.

The Queen went to Florence in the middle of March, and there heard of the defeat of the Government in the debate on the Address (March 17th). She wrote sharply that the Whips must have been very neglectful, and that Rosebery must insist on more care in future. She added that if Ministers themselves held language like Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, and (though in a much less strong degree) even Rosebery, one could not be surprised when a regular revolutionist like Mr. Labouchere became very bold. She went on to say:

“The House of Lords might possibly be improved, but it is *part and parcel* of the *much vaunted* and *admired* British Constitution, and *cannot* be *abolished*.”

Rosebery, in a respectful reply, announced the dispatch of the following memorandum. It reached Florence on April 8th.

10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL, *April 7th, 1894.*

“The present position of the House of Lords must be a subject of anxiety to every one who considers the conditions and possibilities of politics.

“It is not too much to say that that position is, as I have said in public more than once, a source, not of security but of danger. I do not say that this is the fault of the House of Lords—it might easily be argued that it is—but I wish to

put that on one side and to confine myself to stating that in my opinion the peril of the situation arises from circumstances beyond the control of the Peers.

"In 1831 the position of the House of Lords was more attacked than it is now. Had the Peers not yielded then with regard to the Reform Bill they would in all probability have produced a revolution. They did yield, however, and the country turned eagerly to the other questions then opened out, so that, partly from this circumstance, and partly from the difficulty of dealing with it, the question of the House of Lords sank into the background. From 1832 to 1885 the question of the House of Lords had been mainly academical—parties in it were pretty equally divided; the Conservative majority was on the whole wisely led, more especially by the Duke of Wellington; and occasions of friction were comparatively few. But in 1884 the question was anew forced upon the country by the rejection of the Franchise Bill by the House of Lords. There is no doubt that a very strong feeling was then produced. The Franchise Bill was however passed in the Autumn of that year, and in 1885 the House of Commons was elected on the new democratic suffrage. This was in itself a new complication in the position of the House of Lords. For here was a Chamber elected by six millions of voters, all exulting in the exercise of their powers, which was liable to be controlled by another Chamber, not elected in any sense, not representing anybody, and one hereditary in its character.

"In 1886 a further change took place, also disastrous to the House of Lords. On the subject of Home Rule for Ireland a schism took place in the Liberal party, which threw the great mass of the Liberal Peers into the arms of the Conservative majority—so much was this the case that, in addition to the other disadvantages already referred to—the hereditary, irresponsible and unrepresentative character of the House—there was the further embarrassment of its being practically limited to a single party. It was obvious then that, although from 1886 to 1892 there was no difficulty, because the same party was dominant in both Houses, when a House of Commons should be elected in which the majority should be Liberal, there would be immediately an acute conflict. This has soon come to pass. It did not take place on the rejection of the Irish Home Rule Bill, because on that point there was a majority of 70 purely English members on the side of the House of Lords. But on the occasion of

the Employers' Liability Bill the opportunity was seized. Some Liberals like Lord Farrer, for whom I have a profound respect, are of opinion that the Peers were justified in the course they then took. If that be so it is a conclusive proof of the strength of the feeling against the House of Lords. Because, if on a point on which people are divided, and on which the House of Lords certainly appears to be defending freedom of contract, there can be the bitterness of feeling which at present exists, it is obvious that in a dispute with the House of Commons on any great popular issue, the feeling would be overwhelming. Of the strength of the present hostility I have little doubt. Everyone who speaks in the country is astonished at it : I myself have been struck by it in the same way. The apparent slightness of the cause that elicits it is a conclusive proof of its dominant vigour.

"I personally have always been in favour of a Second Chamber, and was an advocate of the Reform of the House of Lords. On two separate occasions I brought the question of its reform before that House, and spoke as plainly on the subject as I do now. It is possible that on those occasions, in 1884 and 1888, reform might have been effected. During the late Government it might also have been managed, but it is not now, I fear, practicable. The House of Commons are violently hostile to the idea, and so is the Liberal party throughout the country ; while the Conservatives are not friendly to it.

"It is easy to understand how galling this House is to the party to which it happens to be opposed. When the Conservative Party is in power, there is practically no House of Lords : it takes whatever the Conservative Government brings it from the House of Commons without question or dispute ; but the moment a Liberal Government is formed, this harmless body assumes an active life, and its activity is entirely exercised in opposition to the Government.

"Therefore while the Conservative party is in, we have not the control of a Second Chamber, but when the Liberal party is in it has to encounter not merely the control, but also the determined hostility of this body. It is in fact a permanent barrier raised against the Liberal party.

"I point this out to show the practical difficulty. For it is of no use to say of the House of Lords that the Peers are conscientious in their action, that they are honestly Tory and honestly Unionist, for the point of the objection is that they are so honestly of one party that they feel it is their duty on

all occasions to oppose the other, a course which, however conscientious, the Government which they thus oppose naturally resents.

"I have drawn up this memorandum to show exactly how the matter stands in my opinion, not to blame the Peers, or indeed to blame anybody, but to show the dangerous incompatibility of their relations with the House of Commons, and the hopelessness of the present position as regards the Liberal party.

"I cannot suggest any remedy, for any remedy which would be agreeable to the House of Commons would be revolting to the House of Lords, and any remedy which would please the House of Lords would be spurned by the House of Commons.

"But it is well to look this serious situation plainly in the face: it is a permanent and not a fleeting danger to the Constitution. It may be said that if the Tories came in to-morrow the question would cease to exist, for the want of harmony would then disappear. But this would only be a postponement, for the Tory party could not hold power for ever and the feeling would simply accumulate against the coming of the next Liberal Government."

The Queen replied at length the next day. She took exception, as so many have, to the description of the House of Lords as unrepresentative, and to his application of the epithet "disastrous" to the Liberal Unionist action in 1886. She did not believe in a strong feeling in the country against the House of Lords, and thought Rosebery unfair in assuming that on any great popular issue it would conflict with the House of Commons. She thought that some day even Rosebery might be thankful for the power and independence of the Peers, and solemnly conjured him not to excite the passions of the people on this subject.

Rosebery replied a week later, first explaining the sense in which he had said that the Peers represented nothing, and why he had called the secession of 1886 "disastrous." It was disastrous to the House of Lords by completely upsetting the balance of parties there and converting it into an entirely anti-Liberal

body. No one would blame Lord Hartington for an entirely conscientious act. However, he himself had used the same language about the Lords for the last ten years, but had never denounced it with the invective employed by Lord John Russell, Mr. Chamberlain, and the present Duke of Devonshire.

"But these statesmen Lord Rosebery is not concerned to defend. His line is simply this, that it is idle to blind oneself to the danger of the present state of things, and that true patriotism consists not in concealing it but in stating it and inviting a remedy."

While the Sovereign was still on her travels he wrote in depression (May 7th):

"At the Foreign Office he had the happiness of being able constantly to report to Your Majesty on matters of European interest, and his endeavours to maintain the proper position of Your Majesty's Government abroad. Now he has nothing to write about which does not appear in the newspapers: sterile and endless discussions in the House of Commons which he himself can only read in newspapers."

A day or two later the Queen replied:

"She too regrets having no longer his able reports on Foreign Affairs. *There* indeed he was a great support to the Queen. . . . The Queen forbears entering on other subjects which might be painful, but cannot help grieving at speeches which she thinks are uncalled for."

There was no mistaking the Royal displeasure. The letter of acknowledgment shows that it was keenly felt:

10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL, *May 14th, 1894.*

"Lord Rosebery with his humble duty submits his reply to Your Majesty's gracious letter.

"He cannot but first offer his respectful thanks for the kindness with which that letter is expressed, as he can readily perceive that Your Majesty feels some disapproval if not disappointment.

"He feared that this would be the case when he most reluctantly obeyed Your Majesty's summons, and he then

urged on Your Majesty that he should be allowed to remain at the Foreign Office. Your Majesty says that '*there* he was indeed a great support to the Queen.' That he hoped was indeed the case, and it was thus that he desired to remain. It was however otherwise decided, to his deep and heartfelt regret.

"He is still serving Your Majesty with earnest and loyal zeal, according to his imperfect lights, and he would ask Your Majesty to realise his position before withdrawing confidence from him.

"He is as Prime Minister more unfortunately situated than any man who ever held that high office.

"He has inherited from his predecessor a policy, a cabinet and a parliament; besides a party of groups—one of which is aimed against himself. All this is kept in existence by a narrow majority which may at any moment break away. He himself is only able to guide this tumultuous party through a leader, bitterly hostile to himself, and ostentatiously indifferent to the fate of the Government.

"Lord Rosebery in the meantime is shut up in a House almost unanimously opposed to his ministry, and, for all political purposes, might as well be in the Tower of London.

"Under these circumstances, though he hates making speeches anywhere, he has no course open to him but to speak in the country. Otherwise, little known as he is, he would be completely eclipsed by the Leader of the House of Commons, and obliterated as Prime Minister.

"As to policy, he is pledged to the policy of Mr. Gladstone's Government, having formed part of that Government. He has no power (even had he the desire) to dissociate himself from it. He did not indeed take an active part in the framing of the measures of that Government, but he is none the less responsible for them.

"What then does Your Majesty expect of him? He cannot now honourably withdraw from the post of hazard, however irksome it may be, and, without presumption, he does not believe that Your Majesty would find in the Liberal (or any) party a minister more truly devoted to Your Majesty. He cannot, even if he wished to do so, withdraw measures which are part of the programme of the Liberal party; for the only result would be that he and not the measures would disappear.

"All that he can do, which some other Liberal ministers conceivably might not, is, while pursuing a Liberal domestic

policy at home, to take care that the interests of Your Majesty's Empire are maintained abroad.

"He believes that he has now laid the whole truth of the position before Your Majesty, he humbly hopes not too unreservedly. But he has written, less as a minister to a Sovereign, than as a gentleman grateful to One who has shewn him so much kindness, and whose good opinion he hopes never to forfeit. He therefore begs that his letter may be seen by Your Majesty's eye alone.

"He does not know that he has anything to add except that, when this Ministry falls, he hopes to extricate himself from politics for ever, as he believed that he had done in 1890."

This letter throws strong light on the writer's inner character. Queen Victoria's reply, in its brevity, its good nature, and its gentle reproof, surely somewhat illuminates hers :

BALMORAL CASTLE, *June 8th, 1894.*

"The Queen has never yet answered Ld. Rosebery's long and confidential letter of the 14th of May & therefore wishes *now* to say a *few* words on the subject. She fully realises the extreme difficulty of his position, having inherited some such (as she must call them) dangerous & almost destructive measures from his Predecessor, which she deeply regrets. But she still hopes that he will act as a check & drag upon his Cabinet.

"What she would however wish to say, speaking *very* openly to him, is that in his Speeches *out* of Parliament he should take a more serious tone, & be, if she may say so, less *jocular* which is hardly befitting a Prime Minister.

"Ld. Rosebery is so clever that he may be carried away by a sense of humour, which is a little dangerous. It is as a sincere well wisher of Lord Rosebery that the Queen says this.

"She does not see how he can disentangle himself from politics, he will be too much wanted."

Queen Victoria disapproved of platform speeches. Parliament was the only stage on which the political drama should be played. In her girlhood campaigning in the country was unknown. Speeches were

made on the hustings at elections, and sometimes at farmers' ordinaries, but rarely elsewhere. Once or twice Mr. Canning's gorgeous eloquence sounded outside Liverpool; but that was something of a novelty. So that she blamed Gladstone for instituting a practice which her more sober-minded statesmen were compelled to follow. It is not easy to judge from this letter whether the Queen mistakenly thought Rosebery to be, in fact, lacking in seriousness or merely to be doing himself an injustice by ill-timed exhibitions of oratorical humour. If the first, she was only in accord with very many others.

Nothing further happened until the autumn, when Rosebery had to wound the Queen's susceptibilities once more. He wrote on October the 24th :

" Lord Rosebery with his duty humbly begs to refer to the correspondence that passed between Your Majesty and himself with regard to the House of Lords in March and April of this year. He does so with sincere regret, as always when he is so unfortunate as to differ in opinion with Your Majesty.

" But he has no choice in the matter, for it will shortly be his duty to lay before the country his policy with regard to that question.

" That policy will consist, in the first place at any rate, in moving a declaratory resolution in the House of Commons of the impossibility of the elected representatives of the people allowing their measures to be summarily mutilated and rejected by the House of Lords.

" This is the least that can be done. The cry in the Liberal party is for the abolition of the House of Lords or of its veto. Lord Rosebery does not believe these measures to be constitutionally practicable, and moreover he is in favour of a Second Chamber of some sort ; though he has long believed that the House of Lords, as at present constituted, cannot continue to exist, and has always frankly and publicly avowed that opinion. What will be the result of such a resolution ? In the first place, the country will have at some time or another to decide upon it at a General Election. Lord Rosebery thinks it possible and even probable in view of the opposition of the English constituencies to Home Rule

that the House of Lords may obtain a majority in its support. In that case he hopes that the Government which would then come in, and which would have the power, would also have the will to bring about a thorough reform of the House of Lords.

"On the other hand, should the constituencies support the Government by a majority which would shew the House of Lords that the country was in earnest, he apprehends that the result would be a complete reform of the House of Lords and a revision of its relations with the House of Commons.

"He does not believe that in any case the country will be content with a single Chamber or content to give uncontrolled authority to the House of Commons.

"But these forecasts may well fail to interest Your Majesty as being empirical. The practical matter is the resolution, and Lord Rosebery can assure Your Majesty that no less will content his party, and he doubts much if that will. He himself though firmly convinced of the necessity of this policy could not go further at this stage.

"Lord Rosebery must again humbly express his regret at reiterating opinions and proposals, with which he has too much reason to fear Your Majesty does not agree. He may however express his hope and belief that it will not be necessary to include any allusion to this topic in the gracious speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament."

DALMENY,

October 24th, 1894.

The Queen at once sent a telegram of strong protest, to which he replied thus :

October 26th, 1894.

"Humble duty ;

"He has to-day received at Sheffield Your Majesty's gracious telegram which has distressed him much.

"He earnestly believes that the best and the highest interests of the country are involved in settling the Constitutional question in a time of calm like the present.

"Did he think otherwise he would humbly ask leave to retire from Your Majesty's Council.

"Later on in time of passion, nothing less than revolutionary proposals will satisfy, and even now he is doubtful if he can hold his own ground against the extreme party.

"The Resolution itself would be of a kind already passed by the House of Commons and will avert a wilder policy.

"He would beg Your Majesty to read his letter once more in the light of this telegram, for he despairs of making his meaning plainer."

The meeting at Bradford, of which Rosebery's letter of the 24th had been the preliminary warning, was attended by 4,500 people. Rosebery spoke for an hour and a quarter, almost entirely on the House of Lords. He traced the history of Parliament from 1832 and the change in its political complexion. He was a Second Chamber man, but with the House of Lords as it was, he hesitated with regard to his principle. The present Second Chamber was a permanent party organisation. The other day a Liberal Peer had gone over and advised the Government that as he could not follow them they had better retire into obscurity. "A very strange piece of advice: because he cannot follow us, he invites us to join him." The House of Lords was a great national danger from a constitutional point of view: it was the greatest issue since the tyranny of Charles I and James II. The abolition of the veto would be a grave difficulty in practice; but he did not believe it would come to revolution, because we settle things without cataclysms. The Government could not claim a mandate, but it was for the House of Commons to pass a firm resolution, and he was sure they would. It could never be expunged from the books of the House. After that he appealed to the people of the country, to ask whether they desired a revision of the constitution or not—"We fling down the gauntlet. It is for you to back us up."

The voice of Balmoral was not likely to echo these sentiments and the Queen wrote (October 30th) that she had waited to read the speech before saying more. She complained bitterly that she had never been consulted on this policy, not to speak of her sanction being obtained. She quoted several of Rosebery's strenuous expressions, certain to arouse public passions. She admitted the necessity of

reforms in the House of Lords, but the opinion of the Sovereign was ignored by this demand for a revision of the Constitution :

“The Queen is truly grieved at having had to write all this to Lord Rosebery, whose personal devotion and loyalty to herself are well known to her, and she does not doubt he is placed in a most difficult position, but she does not think he will avert the evils he dreads by the course he proposes to pursue.”

Rosebery, it will be observed, altogether refused to admit the need of the Queen's sanction before submitting a question to a popular audience. His defence of his action is given in full :

10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL, *November 1st, 1894.*

“Lord Rosebery with his humble duty desires to express his sense of the considerate tone of Your Majesty's letter just received, in spite of the difference of opinion which unfortunately exists between Your Majesty and himself with regard to the best course to adopt under present circumstances.

“Lord Rosebery's own view of the situation is this—that it is from the broadest point of view important to take advantage of the present opportunity. He believes that the system by which the House of Lords—now, unfortunately, owing to causes on which he will not dwell, a party organisation—controls a Liberal but not a Conservative Government is obnoxious to the conscience of the country as well as to its best interests. But he also believes that this is a moment of calm and therefore favourable to revision. What he has always dreaded, as he has stated in public, is that the question of the House of Lords should come for decision at a crisis of passion and storm. Then the Constitution would be hurriedly cast into the crucible with lamentable and incalculable results.

“The policy of the Government practically comes to this—that the Constitution cannot long stand the strain of a permanent control exercised by a Conservative branch of the Legislature on all Liberal Governments ; that it is well that this question should be decided at a peaceful juncture ; and that in the issue between the House of Lords and the House of Commons the Government takes the side of the House of Commons.

"Beyond this Lord Rosebery does not go.

"Your Majesty will have noticed the marked way in which he asserted himself as a Second Chamber man, as against many of his own party who, unthinkingly in his opinion, declare themselves partisans of an uncontrolled House of Commons. This point is vital to Lord Rosebery : it might not be by any means vital to other Liberal Governments, and he begs Your Majesty's serious attention to this point.

"Your Majesty notes however that expressions were used by Lord Rosebery which appear to Your Majesty too energetic. Lord Rosebery would humbly remind Your Majesty that he was speaking to a tumultuous audience of 5,000 people ; that under those circumstances it is necessary to use broad popular language ; and that it is impossible to argue points under such circumstances in the style appropriate to a drawing room or a library. He has not seen among hostile criticisms any that describe his language as excessive ; he has seen several however that characterise it as feeble, including *The Times*.

"To turn to another point, he would never dream of proposing a constitutional resolution to the House of Commons without submitting it after mature consideration by the Cabinet to Your Majesty. But he would humbly deprecate the view that it is necessary for a minister before laying a question of policy before a popular audience to receive the approval of the Crown. Such a principle would tend to make the Sovereign a party in all the controversies of the hour and would hazardously compromise the neutrality of the Sovereign. But should a Ministry desire to present to Parliament a resolution of this kind they would certainly be ignorant of the first elements of their duty did they neglect to obtain the sanction of the Sovereign to its being presented for the decision of Parliament.

"Your Majesty will, he is sure, do him the justice to recollect that within a month of his succeeding Mr. Gladstone in Her Council he submitted the question of the House of Lords to Your Majesty with the reasons which made him consider it the gravest problem before the Government. He was not then animated by pique at any action of the House of Lords, for no such action had taken place during his short tenure of the Treasury. He simply felt it his duty to warn Your Majesty of what was in his mind ; and he therefore believed that Your Majesty would not feel any astonishment at the intention of the Government to propose a resolution

on this subject. Nothing was less in his contemplation than to take Your Majesty by surprise.

“In conclusion, he will only once more express his sorrow at finding himself in disagreement with Your Majesty. Your Majesty does him no more than justice in believing in his loyalty, devotion and honesty of aim. But he wishes that he could persuade Your Majesty that the policy which he recommends is sound in itself, essentially conservative in the best sense, and the one best calculated to avert evils which might wreck and ruin much in the Constitution which he desires to preserve.”

A postscript to this letter followed on November 8th :

“Lord Rosebery with his humble duty ventures to make an addition to his last letter, for he is in truth concerned and distressed beyond measure with regard to Your Majesty’s feelings on this House of Lords question. If by any conceivable means he could relieve Your Majesty he would gladly do so. Did he believe that his resignation of office would assist Your Majesty, he would ask Your Majesty’s permission to retire to-morrow. But he fears that the result would be quite different. He believes that he is in fact the moderating influence in this matter. Nearly if not quite half of the Cabinet is in favour of a Single Chamber. The more prominent people in the Liberal party appear to be of the same opinion.

“Lord Rosebery is consequently between two fires ; on the one side he is attacked by the Tories, and on the other (which is a greater difficulty) by his own side because he is strongly in favour of a Second Chamber.

“Had Lord Rosebery persuaded the Government to take no action whatever with regard to the House of Lords the Government would have been turned out within a week of the re-assembling of Parliament, and this too on a cause which he cannot conscientiously defend.

“He has taken the mildest and he firmly believes the wisest course in the interest of the Constitution and of all concerned. But he is aware that any dealing with the House of Lords is distasteful to Your Majesty, and he wishes with all his heart that One who has been so good to him and to whom he is so sincerely devoted should be spared all pain on this and on every other subject.”

The Queen replied in a somewhat softened mood :

About November 13th, 1894.

"The Queen did not answer Lord Rosebery's letter of Novr. 1st feeling it was useless to further discuss a question in which there is, alas ! such divergence of opinion between us.

"But she must thank him for his kind letter of the 8th.

"He is mistaken however in thinking that '*any dealing with the H. of L.*' is '*distasteful*' to her.

"The Queen fully recognises the necessity for its reform . . . and would be glad to know the broad outlines of Lord Rosebery's plan of reconstruction.

"The Queen cannot agree with what Lord Rosebery says, in his letter of the 1st, as to the announcement of this Policy.

"It is *not* a 'mere question of policy,' but as he himself said '*a question of enormous importance,*' a '*question of the revision of the entire constitution*' and, as such, she maintains her sanction for its public declaration should have been obtained.

"The Queen believes and appreciates what Lord R. says : that he is concerned and distressed at her feeling—and she sees that Lord Rosebery evidently thinks that the House of Lords will suffer less at his hands than at those of his followers, and she realises that his position is a difficult one.

"But the Queen would ask Lord Rosebery and his Cabinet to bear in mind that 57 years ago the Constitution was delivered into her keeping and that right or wrong she has her views as to the fulfilment of that trust.

"She cannot but think Lord Rosebery will feel that *his* position is not the only difficult one in these democratic days."

So the constitutional duel was suspended for the time.

Unfortunately there were other fences to be got over. Rosebery went to Glasgow on November 11th, and, besides refuting Lord Salisbury's description of him as a Single Chamber man, and pointing out that temperance legislation could have no chance in the present House of Lords, he proclaimed Scottish Dis-establishment as a permanent part of the Liberal programme. The manes might or might not be Tory agencies, but the Established Church was in no way representative of Scotland as a whole.

The Queen called attention to her oath on accession to the Throne, and deeply deplored the speech. She would do all that lay in her power to be true to her promise.

Fortunately, this question, which aroused such bitter passions in heavenly minds, solved itself later by happier methods than did the grant of Home Rule.

Rosebery had been for a couple of days to Balmoral early in October, when Her Majesty was in great good humour. After the above correspondence he did not in fact see the Queen during the year, not being summoned to Windsor.

At one of his earlier visits to Windsor (June 21st) :

"The Queen told me some curious things. She did not know if she was Alexandrina Victoria or *vice versa*. Quite true that George IV wished her to be Georgina,¹ and that the Duke of Kent insisted on Alexandrina as the Russian Emperor had been so kind. William IV had wished to change her name to Charlotte, when he was King."

So the Victorians, now so sadly regarded, might have been Charlotteans, if not Alexandrinians or Georgineans.

Throughout the Session of 1894 Harcourt was conducting his Budget with extraordinary skill and with the supple discretion which he so often displayed in Parliament, though so seldom in Council. That memorable measure, which to this harassed generation of surtax payers appears so merciful, excited no little disquiet among the propertied class. Rosebery did not wish to argue points endlessly in the Cabinet, so he prepared a memorandum for Harcourt's personal consumption, no doubt stating the defendants' case more emphatically than he would to a colleague with whom he was in greater sympathy. As Lord Spencer, not entirely agreeing with Rosebery, put it to Harcourt,² Rosebery, by not circulating his memorandum, had desired to bow to the judgment of the author of the Budget. Looking back at all the circumstances,

¹ More probably Georgiana.

² *Life*, vol. ii, p. 287.

one may doubt whether, if Rosebery were to write a memorandum at all, it would not have been wiser to compose one for the Cabinet rather than for a critic so hostile. At any rate his paper aroused a reply which is given in full in Harcourt's *Life*.¹ Four years later (April 1898) Rosebery noted as follows :

"It is usual in Cabinets to exchange in strict confidence observations on each other's proposals. This is of the essence of a Cabinet : as their deliberations must be largely on paper, Cabinet sittings being, in proportion to the vast interests of government, brief and hurried.

"But of course if such minutes were couched in the tone of this of W. V. H., such interchange of opinion would be impossible.

"I took no notice of this document except to show it to J. Morley—a judge little favourable to me—who expressed himself as full of indignation.²

"There was practically no opposition in the Cabinet to the Budget, except that I reduced the maximum with the aid of Fowler (so Fowler says, and I have no doubt he assisted, though not at the Cabinet) from 10 to 8 per cent. We spent dreary hours in listening to H. reading out typewritten discourses on the Budget (which was the work of Alfred Milner).

"Afterwards, when I resigned the leadership in 1896, Harcourt informed the Press that I had offered the most violent opposition to his Budget, which he had only overcome by the threat of resignation. This was in the first place untrue, and secondly, had it been true, a violation of Cabinet confidence."

It would be tedious to reproduce here the whole of the conflicting arguments. In his paper Harcourt dealt *seriatim* with Rosebery's protests. Rosebery, for his own satisfaction, made comments in pencil on some of his colleague's rejoinders : for instance, Rosebery had said that property would be arrayed against the Government as an alarmed adversary, and the last relics of their propertied followers

¹ Vol. ii, pp. 283-6.

² Sir William Harcourt evidently put a different construction on the comment Morley made to him. *Life*, vol. ii, p. 287.

would be alienated. Harcourt, in reply, cited his recollection of Mr. Gladstone's great battle on the Succession Duty in 1853, after which landed proprietors had hated him. Rosebery pencilled: "The Budgets may resemble each other, but there is a difference in the men."

Harcourt went on to speak of "another party which was founded 1894 years ago," and to think it likely that many young men would "go away sorrowful because they had great possessions." Against this was noted: "No, it is the young men who are to inherit great possessions who will suffer. So this refined innuendo is beside the mark."

It was hopeless, Harcourt proceeded, to avert "the horizontal division of parties" which was the outcome of Household Suffrage. Rosebery differed, because the Tories had a fair representation of all classes.

Death Duties, said Harcourt, only occur once in a generation. Rosebery observed that there had been three Dukes of Bedford in three years, to take one example.¹

The money was needed, Harcourt said, for the reduction of other taxes, "or what is more probable, to satisfy further Jingo panics." He himself could not be interested in the possible loss to Election Funds, for he had paid as much in purse and in person as he intended to do. Against this is noted the single word "Coriolanus!!"

In conclusion Harcourt thought it hardly fair to bury the two memoranda in their "respective bosoms," but that their colleagues should form their judgment upon them. Rosebery's pencilled comment runs: "Mine has never entered my bosom: your views not merely pervade London in a red box, but are recited to the loungers of the lobbies."

The only concession in Harcourt's paper was the

¹ As Harcourt's biographer remarks, vol. ii, p. 288: "Events were to make an ironic comment on this phase of the Budget when, ten years later, the Nuneham estates changed hands by death twice within six months."

desire to mitigate the scale of graduation of death duties so far as exigencies of the Revenue would permit.

At the end of the document Rosebery wrote : " Mr. Pitt said ' Patience.' "

But the immortal advice from Spain, " Patience, and shuffle the cards," comes easily to the Walpoles and Campbell-Bannermans of public life, never to a Charles Fox or a Rosebery. Still, in writing to the Queen (July 13th), he put the best face he could on the business.

" With regard to the Budget, it is practically passed, and it would be impossible now to make any change in its provisions. Lord Rosebery is himself inclined to take a somewhat gloomy view of its effects on the class to which he himself belongs. He cannot however deny that there is much to be said for it in the sense of its being logically just, and he believes that the landowning class must avert its severer effects by two courses which in themselves are good ; that is, by handing over property in their lifetime to their children, and by greater simplicity of living."

The whole episode may be regarded as marking the definite separation of Rosebery from his Chancellor of the Exchequer. There had been acute divergences on foreign affairs, sometimes involving moral issues, but not accusations of personal interest. In this correspondence incautiously invited by Rosebery, Harcourt enjoyed giving rein to his powers of provocation by implying that the paper under reply merely came from a rich man who disliked being taxed. Cardinal de Retz was not far wrong when he wrote :

" On a plus de peine dans les Partis, de vivre avec ceux qui en sont, que d'agir contre ceux qui y sont opposés."

Still greater was the enjoyment of Harcourt's son. Lewis Harcourt, like Tennyson's son Hallam in a different way of life, had joyfully put aside the prospect of a brilliant personal career. It was his task to

be his father's right-hand man ; and to do everything to ensure his succession to the seat of power when Gladstone left it. It was an admirable renunciation ; and the intense chagrin felt by the son when the father was passed over demands the sympathy of everybody. But it had its dangerous side. It is not good for anybody to live entirely in political *couloirs*, with no responsibility or public duty to keep him straight. Throughout this brief Government Lewis Harcourt's part was to glorify his father's great financial achievement. It was not his business to help the Government as a whole, in the lobbies or elsewhere—and it was tempting to dismiss with a shrug the Prime Minister and one or two of his colleagues as unworthy leaders of the party. Fifteen years had to pass before Lewis Harcourt was able to show his real quality as a capable Minister and an excellent colleague in a Liberal administration.

As Leader of the House of Lords Rosebery perforce had to intervene with a few words in many discussions. These are not worth noting separately. On the Budget, he confided himself to moving the second reading, leaving the defence of the measure to the Lord Chancellor.

With his knowledge of London needs, he spoke at some length on the Report of a Select Committee on the question of Betterment in Town Improvements. That Committee had fenced round acceptance of the principle with safeguards which made its application most difficult, as he pointed out in detail (August 16th). He also took charge of the Equalisation of Rates Bill, which obtained a modified blessing from Lord Salisbury. And he conducted a measure enabling the British Museum to buy sixty-nine houses and gardens from the Duke of Bedford.

Rosebery combined the Presidency of the Council with his office of First Lord of the Treasury, and in the former capacity attended the first Court of the new Welsh University. It was a great occasion, he said, because it would be a people's university, not

"a place to which men of wealth will come to put a final polish on a leisurely course of education fastidiously gone through." Besides, it represented the spirit of nationality in its best form.

He spoke at the Royal Academy Banquet, and attended, June 4th, at Eton, where the Provost wished him success at Epsom in two days' time, and Rosebery—after deploring the fact that there were only two Etonians in his Cabinet, against three Harrovians—thanked the Provost for his unprecedented good wishes, and added that, in spite of representations he received from Anti-Gamblers, he felt no vestige of shame in possessing a good horse. And a very good horse it was. Through the year Rosebery had been able to pay flying visits to Newmarket to see *Ladas* at work, and to enjoy the company of his trainer, Matthew Dawson, a man as remarkable in intellect as in character. The colt won the Two Thousand easily, and then the intermediate event of the Newmarket Stakes (May 9th). Then came the Derby. Rosebery noted (June 6th):

"A memorable day for me. I won the Derby with *Ladas* just twenty-five years after the first *Ladas* disgraced himself and me in the same race. The scene was one of delirious enthusiasm. I scarcely know why.

"It began raining heavily after the race, but the Prince of Wales asked me as a personal favour to come to his dinner, as this was an historical occasion. So I went up and he proposed my health."

As a rule Rosebery, entertaining a party of old friends at the Durdans, was excused attendance at the Prince's Derby Dinner. To anticipate events, the hero of the Derby caused some disappointment later on, being defeated, with some ill-luck, in the three other great races he contested this year, including the St. Leger at Doncaster.

Not a few of Rosebery's political followers looked on these racing triumphs with anything but favour. It is necessary to distinguish the various notes of dis-



Matthew Dawson. Lord Rosebery.

J. Watts up.

LADAS, 1894.

approval. To a powerful minority of keen Liberals the Turf represented open vice. Such men would no more have thought of being seen on a race-course than of frequenting a *Maison Tellier*. But others, less fanatical, disliked the thought of a Liberal Prime Minister winning the Derby. As Rosebery himself pointed out, it was absurd to overlook the possession of a few bad horses and to object to a good one. Beyond question; but if an analogy may be suggested from another kind of sport, it is safe to say that all Queen Victoria's Prime Ministers, except Disraeli, were, or had been, in the habit of going out shooting. Some, like Sir Robert Peel and Rosebery himself, were adepts. But if any one of them had earned the fame of having killed an unequalled number of grouse or partridges in a day, like a Lord de Grey or a Lord Walsingham, heads would have been shaken. To watch *Ladas* gallop was no greater distraction from serious politics than to denounce Vaticanism in a pamphlet, with Gladstone, or to work in a chemical laboratory, with Salisbury. But it was somehow felt that the ownership of a Derby favourite was too absorbing a pastime for the wearer of Gladstone's mantle.

In another *apologia* for his taste for racing he mentioned that Oliver Cromwell owned horses. This fired the inimitable invention of Frank Lockwood, who sent him a sketch of the Lord Protector, in the slouch hat and soft riding boots of the seventeenth century, but with race-glasses slung over his shoulder, gloomily regarding a string of weedy thoroughbreds, with O.C. on their quartersheets, being ridden round the ring of a race-course.

A distraction of a less invidious sort was a visit to Bristol (October 30th) to receive its Freedom—the first offered him in England—and to unveil a statue of Burke, the gift of the local magnate, Sir William Wills. He dwelt on the apparent paradox that Burke, an ardent reformer all his life, ended in a frenzy of violent Toryism. Burke dreaded Parliamentary reform, because in the circumstances of the

moment it might lead to the revolution that he hated. It was a consolation to us pygmies of a later day that this great master of eloquence and political genius saw so little of success in his lifetime. His last memorable and pathetic words to Bristol—"What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue"—sum up the life of every politician, and perhaps of every man. Burke, he concluded, looms larger and larger, while the figures of others of his day grow dimmer and dimmer, for his fame rests on the broad foundation of political wisdom.

There was some return to social life. He dined with Horace Farquhar¹—a well-known figure in London as a close ally of Lord Fife—and noted "the first time I have dined out unofficially for years." Earlier there had been two eminently unofficial occasions. First, his old allies of Loder's Club at Christ Church celebrated their new Prime Minister by a dinner at the Grand Hotel (April 27th), one of his closest friends, Philip Wroughton, being in the chair.²

At the second (June 25th) the same party assembled:

"Gave dinner to twenty-five old Christ Church friends in honour of the final disappearance of *Ladas* the First. Very pleasant."

He went to see *Faust*:

"How long, I wonder, since I have been to an opera?"

¹ (1844–1923.) G.C.B. Cr. Lord Farquhar 1898, and Earl 1923.

² Lord Bute.

Colonel Follett.

Philip Wroughton.

J. H. Mossop.

F. Hamlyn.

G. Duncombe.

A. Smith Barry.

A. Turnor.

E. S. Hope.

F. Parker.

Lord Galway.

Lord Ilchester.

Mr. Fuller Maitland.

Sir C. Boyle.

W. W. Phipps.

E. W. Hamilton.

J. Frederick.

Lord Tweedmouth.

W. G. Marshall.

Hon. W. V. Verney.

C. Cotes.

Sir Frederick Milner.

A. V. Pryor.

Lord Emlyn.

H. Evans Gordon.

And to a concert at Buckingham Palace :

“ How many years since I last went to a Queen’s Concert?”

Free from departmental work, he was able to spend more of the autumn in Scotland. He was twice at Dunrobin, the Highland home of his great friends the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland. There he again attempted deer-stalking, with more success, and killed his fair share of stags. There were also happily quiet days at Dalmeny for the boys’ summer holidays, and again in October.

Relations with the Gladstone family were unimpaired :

April 18th.—“ Drove with Neil to see Mr. G. at Dollis Hill. Mr. G. in bed. Greatly occupied by the flag on the Victoria Tower. If at all, it should be larger, and would be a great strain on the tower. He seemed doubtful about graduation. As charming as ever. Neil asked for his blessing and received it.”

He went to Hawarden in November, for a family party, and found his host depressed but, as always, busily occupied :

“ The pamphlet Mr. G. sat up all night writing was ‘ The Ministry and the Sugar Duties in 1844.’ ”

The happiest occasion of the year was the marriage of Henry Asquith, a colleague with whom he had become closely intimate, with Margot Tennant. Rosebery’s friendship with the whole family at Glen had been affectionate for many years past.

The saddest was the hopeless illness of Blanche Lady Waterford, perhaps the figure in the London world best loved by everybody who knew her, and a very perfect character. Rosebery wrote : “ I went to see Lady Waterford. A divine spectacle of resignation.”

The Prince of Wales had attended the funeral of his brother-in-law the Emperor of Russia, and as usual had helped by his sympathy and clear sense to

improve international relations. On his return Rosebery wrote to him :

10 DOWNING STREET, *December 6th, 1894.*

" SIR,

" I am anxious to be among the first to welcome your Royal Highness home, and to express my deep sense of the good and patriotic work that you have accomplished since you left England.

" Never has Your Royal Highness stood so high in the national esteem as to-day, for never have you had such an opportunity. That at last has come, and has enabled you to justify the highest anticipations, and to render a signal service to your country, as well as to Russia and the peace of the world.

" I am, Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" ROSEBERY."

In spite of freedom from departmental drudgery, and open-air weeks in Scotland, Rosebery was weakening under the mental strain of his uncomfortable leadership. He was at Mentmore after the middle of December, and became decidedly unwell, with some sort of chill, as he thought. His doctor, however, sanctioned a visit to Sandringham, and Rosebery did not suffer physically at the moment.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LIFE OF PITT AND OTHER LITERARY WORK 1891-1911

As all experience tells, the aimlessness, and the occasional lethargy which mark the reaction from an overwhelming trouble, are best fought by physical fatigue on the one side, and by regular or even monotonous mental employment on the other. Rosebery was sure not to neglect exercise in the open air, but the other remedy might have been less easy to discover. The outlines of party politics were blurred, and his work on the County Council was done for the time being. It was thus fortunate that an opportunity had already offered for literary work exactly suited to his own tastes and to his special gifts. The short historical biographies of "Twelve English Statesmen" were being published by Messrs. Macmillan, under the general editorship of John Morley, who himself rather unexpectedly undertook the Life of Walpole. Rosebery had been invited to take charge of William Pitt. His uncle, Lord Stanhope, had been responsible for the principal biography of his illustrious relative in four volumes; Macaulay had written a famous essay; and Professor Goldwin Smith an appreciation. But Rosebery saw clearly that there was room for something different. In an octavo volume of some 300 pages, he could present a kit-cat portrait, set in a background adorned by other political figures. The result was the book which establishes his claims to a high place in the world of letters. Two of his later works, that on the last days of Napoleon and that on Randolph Churchill, may appear even more symmetrically perfect, but neither of these represents the same scope of research and concentrated labour. When the book appeared, a

chorus of approval greeted it in England and America. I select the opinions of a few who, for one reason or another, were qualified to give them, some as adepts in the writing craft, others as political experts. Rosebery kept these letters in a special portfolio, as he did no others of the like kind. Mr. Gladstone's praise was unstinted, though it was impossible for him not to add some qualifications on matters of personal opinion. He wrote :

"MY DEAR ROSEBERY,

"To-day brings with it the discharge of a very pleasant duty, for I received to-day (probably through your kindness) a copy of your Pitt, and though I am a slow, a distracted, and a laden man, I have read half of it, and have seen him launched into the War. My anticipations were high, but it has passed them. It is (in my view) the ablest monograph of the kind that I have ever read. Let me say all in one word, it is masterly work, and places you at once high on the literary ladder.

"There are of course questions of detail to remark upon. Beyond these I find one sentence only before page 123 from which I seriously differ. It is that about inner Cabinets.¹

"At page 123 we come to the divergence of the roads on the War. My summing up of the matter is this : that it is probably at once the biggest error ever recorded in history, and the most excusable. . . . Let me end with a most hearty, most thoroughgoing congratulation.

"HAWARDEN,

November 25th, 1891."

"Affectly yours,

"W. E. GLADSTONE.

Mary Gladstone, to whom a copy had also been sent, wrote that her father had pronounced the book to be a masterpiece, and that he seemed "Almost startled, if you understand what I mean, at the historic grip and grasp, besides at its pure literary qualities."

Sir William Harcourt was not less enthusiastic :

¹ *Pitt*, Macmillan, 1891, p. 109. "An inner Cabinet, indeed, is not unfamiliar to us ; and, as the numbers constituting Cabinets increase, it must become a recognised institution."

Subsequent experience has tended to enforce Rosebery's view rather than that of his chief.

MALWOOD, LYNDHURST, November 25th, 1891.

“DEAR ROSEBERY,

“I sat up till the small hours this morning devouring ‘Pitt,’ which reached me yesterday.

“It is what our favourite writers of the eighteenth century would have called ‘an excellent piece.’

“I think the style admirable,—the grouping of the topics (of all arts the most difficult) as good as possible—interspersed and lighted up at sufficient intervals with flashes of wit. It is the carbon of Stanhope crystallised and cut into a brilliant. I feel certain it will be—nay is—an accomplished literary success, and everyone will say as they do of the newborn babe, ‘How like its father.’ . . . Everyone will feel, my dear friend, that you have wisely and bravely encountered the *annus luctus*, and produced a worthy memorial of your sorrow.

“When I have shaken off the glamour of your word-painting, I shall one day have a Whig crow or two to pluck with you, for I am still a Whig and learned from Sir Cornwall Lewis to revere Grenville. But if there are some things which shock the Whig soul there are others which will make the Tories furious, so on the whole (as Goschen said) justice is done. To me the history of Pitt’s socialistic scheme of 1796 was quite new (as it is barely discernible in Stanhope) in which he out-Josephs Joe and out-Jesses Collings. . . . Good-bye, my dear fellow. *Valete et plaudite*. It has given all a happy day.”

Other colleagues presented their bouquets: Lord Ripon saying how much he admired “the excellence of its style, the vigour of its portrait, and the skill of its advocacy”; Sir Charles Dilke had been certain that he would produce a perfect book on this subject; Cardinal Manning sent a long letter, observing that to him the two greatest men in our history were William Pitt and S. Thomas of Canterbury. “In isolated grandeur they are of one heroic kind.” The comparison sounds complementary to Rosebery’s of Charles Fox and Martin Luther, on which the Duchess of Cleveland made amused comment in her letter of congratulation. Admiring letters poured in from French and American friends; Herbert Bismarck,

fluent in English, was amazed at "the stupendous amount of knowledge embodied in this one volume. . . . I think you have managed to remain wonderfully impartial, and that must not have been an easy task, as everybody who cares for his own country always must have a certain bias towards its greatest men." Lastly came the experts, pronouncing their verdict of academic approval. William Cory, since he gave up schoolmastering, had immersed himself in the study of Modern History. He wrote :

PILGRIMS' LANE, N.W., *November 26th, 1891.*

"DEAR AUTHOR, GIVER OF A GOOD BOOK,

"I thank you kindly for sending me *Pitt*, and I send my notes straight off. . . . I have Everard's latest photograph on my mantelpiece. I wish he had lived to see your progress and to share your pains.

"Let me write as Pitt did,

"Yours affy., WILLIAM CORY."

Fifteen sides of notepaper are covered with closely written notes of learned and instructive criticism, concluded thus :

"I have read the book with all my might, and I feel that I have learnt a great deal from it and it makes me wish to read a great deal more.

"It seems to me not (as I feared) too witty or smart, far above Macaulay in real generosity, far above Lecky in beauty of form, far above Froude in judicial statement.

"It seems to me a treatise that may actually do good to our people and to the candid men of other lands.

"I have been busy and anxious ever since it came here (Nov. 23), but I have enjoyed it heartily.

"*Non sine lacrymis.*"

The Master of Balliol had not been able to add Rosebery's name to his glowing list of political *alumni* ; but his triumph was a triumph for Oxford, and he wrote kindly if a shade pontifically :

BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD, *November 26th, 1891.*

"The book has arrived here, and I am delighted with it. I know of no life of an English Statesman which is equal

to it in justice of appreciation, or in pathetic interest. It will greatly raise your reputation, not merely as a literary man, but as a politician. The sadness, the courage, the greatness, the tragedy of Pitt's life, are given as they have never been before, because no one has been capable of feeling them in the same way. There is no one in political life, except perhaps Morley, who could have written such a book, and he would not have treated the subject with equal fairness.

"There is nothing in common between Pitt and Gladstone, a good deal between Pitt and Peel, and something between Chatham and Gladstone. But these comparisons are shadowy and hardly worth making.

"It doubles the power of the statesman when he possesses the gift of writing as well as of speaking; there is more wisdom and also more freedom in it. If he has the gift of silence, without the appearance of excessive caution, and an insight into the natures of men, which can only be given by a silent sympathy with them, he may have a large share in the government of them.

"Believe me, dear Lord Rosebery,

"Ever yours sincerely,

"B. JOWETT.

"Are you not rather too hard on the Whigs, who gave us some excellent political maxims of toleration and the like? I asked the Duke of Bedford why the Whigs have always been so unpopular. He said, 'Because they were so jobbing and exclusive.' I think it was rather because they were so ignorant of the world and of mankind."

Rosebery must have valued as highly as any the opinions of James Bryce and of H. D. Traill. The latter was just issuing his *Life of Lord Salisbury*, in the parallel series, "*The Queen's Prime Ministers*," and spoke of his "literary twinship," and of Rosebery's "masterly picture of the man, his times, and his contemporaries. In particular such a vivid and striking little sketch as that of Fox makes one hope that you will some day give us a gallery of eighteenth-century portraits."

Bryce wrote :

54 PORTLAND PLACE, *November 24th*, 1891.

"MY DEAR ROSEBERRY,

"Thank you heartily for your *Pitt*. It came last night, and getting in very tired and rather poorly, at 11.30 p.m., I was imprudent enough to glance at it and got so fascinated that I had to sit up well into the small hours. It seems to me the most vivid and telling book of the kind I have read, and able to hold its place beside Macaulay's and Goldwin Smith's biographies, and above all others that have dealt with Pitt.

"If you were to wish for any criticism with a view to the next edition, I would say that it strikes me you sometimes assume rather too much knowledge of the events of the time in the reader's mind. True, you are writing not a history but the life of Pitt: I would not ask for much to be added, but here and there, as at the coalition time, a page or so might supply a setting of facts which will make the story plainer to the less and less instructed public of our day. This is really the only fault or suggestion I have to pick or find; you do indeed seem to me somewhat too lenient to Pitt's faults, but you know the facts so much better than I that I acquiesce.

"What I do want to express is my unqualified admiration for the vigour and the brightness with which the story has been told, as well as for the penetration, the analytical power, and the political wisdom that abound throughout the book.

"Sincerely yours,

"J. BRYCE."

This was the considered opinion of one master in the same craft. Another seemed to be a little more doubtful. John Morley, the editor of the series, set down a typed slip beginning:

"Nothing can be more agreeable to read, or more brightly written, in spite of a certain heaviness, due partly to excess of substantives, and partly to too great a desire to impress not only the author's meaning, but his opinion. For instance . . ."

A critical list follows, coolly but not ill-naturedly drawn. In conversation with myself Morley was not entirely favourable to the book as a whole. He seemed to look on it rather as a brilliant prize essay

than as what an historical monograph should be—the overflow from a vast reservoir of learning, skilfully directed into a particular channel. This, surely, was not quite fair. Rosebery was not a Stubbs or a Maitland, but his knowledge of the eighteenth century was deep as well as wide. Perhaps, too, Morley entertained some unconscious mistrust of one who had not ground regularly at the academic mill, and had not undergone the probation of a chartered man of letters. But there should be some reciprocity in these judgments. Morley himself justly resented the slipshod opinion that ranked him as a reviewer turned politician, not as a tried official of firm decision and prompt action at difficult moments.

Rosebery's delighted letter to his mother from Amalfi may conclude the section. She must have been misled by his attachment to Lady Holland and St. Ann's Hill.

January 22nd, 1892.

"I was very glad to learn that you liked my little book. I was particularly pleased that you guessed that my sympathies were secretly with Fox against Pitt. It is the greatest tribute to my fairness that I have received, for they are wholly and entirely the other way."

In a conversation with Sir William Harcourt in 1894, John Morley spoke of Rosebery's "affectation of literature."¹ His rather grudging judgment of *Pitt* has been described above, and its probable explanation. As a matter of fact, in after years, when their intimacy had grown close, he thoroughly enjoyed long talks with Rosebery on literature, French and British, as on many other topics. He would certainly then have admitted that nobody could be freer than Rosebery from pretensions as a critic of the academic type. In the two volumes of *Miscellanies* brought together by Mr. John Buchan, of thirty-three pieces only the addresses on Robert Burns, Dr. Johnson,

¹ *Life of Sir William Harcourt*, vol. ii, p. 269.

Thackeray, and Robert Louis Stevenson deal directly with men of letters. And the first two of these appear on the canvas as great human figures rather than as authors. There is no detailed examination of their writings, and a palpable unwillingness to embark on such a quest.

The centenary of Burns's death was honoured on July 21st, 1896. Twelve years before (July 26th, 1884), Rosebery had unveiled the Burns statue on the Thames Embankment, the gift of Mr. John Gordon Crawford. It was not quite the same thing as a speech to Scotsmen in Scotland, but it was a forecast of these two great efforts. After saying, amid applause, that too much had been made of the painful character of part of Burns's life, he concluded :

" It was not much for him to die so young : he died in noble company, for he died at the age which took away Raphael and Byron—the age which Lord Beaconsfield has called the fatal age of 37. After all, in life there is but a very limited stock of life's breath ; some draw it in deep sighs and make an end ; some draw it in quick draughts and have done with it ; and some draw it placidly through four-score quiet years ; but genius as a rule makes quick work with it. It crowds a lifetime into a few brief years, and then passes away, as if glad to be delivered of its message to the world, and glad to be delivered from an uncongenial sphere. Byron and Burns together hardly more than exceeded those three-score years and ten which are said to fulfil the life of man ; but none will deny that they had lived their full life—that they had done the full work which was appointed them to do, and we have no right to repine in view of so much achievement if to the mere mortal eye they do not seem to live their full tale of years. They had exhausted human fame and human happiness, and it was time for them to be gone."

Now, on the afternoon of that July day in 1896, Rosebery addressed the burgesses of Dumfries, " surrounded by the choicest and the most sacred haunts of the poet." It was, indeed, he told them, a wider demonstration than " Scotsmen honouring the greatest of Scotsmen," for representatives had come from

all quarters of the globe to pay tribute to Robert Burns. The speech as a whole is in a minor key. Burns died at Dumfries, and his last days there were spent in poverty and in deep depression. "There is nothing much more melancholy in all biography," reflected Rosebery; and it would have been happy for him to have died earlier. But Burns himself had foretold that a hundred years after his death he would be more respected than he was "at present"; and that prophecy was being incomparably fulfilled. The world-wide celebration of his birthday; the pilgrimages to his different resorts; the erection of statues, "a hardy annual"; the editions of his works:

"Whatever Burns may have contemplated in his prediction, whatever dream he may have fondled in the wildest moments of elation, must have fallen utterly short of the reality. And it is all spontaneous. There is no puff, no advertisement, no manipulation. . . . His true life began with his death; with the body passed all that was gross and impure; the clear spirit stood revealed, and soared at once to its accepted place among the fixed stars, in the firmament of the rare immortals."

The same evening found Rosebery at Glasgow, holding a great audience in St. Andrew's Hall. This second address is the more finished of the two, perhaps giving clearer evidence of the *limæ labor* than any that he delivered, and in sheer eloquence touching his highest level. It covers, too, a wider field than the Dumfries speech, but also called up the spirit of the man rather than that of the poet, though devoting a few pregnant sentences to his art. Shakespeare and Burns, he maintained, are the two great natural forces in British literature whose power seems sheer inspiration and nothing else; if the speaker had to prove his words by quoting the poetry of Burns he would never cease, so its incomparable excellence must be taken for granted. "But I must ask you to remember that the poetry is only a fragment of Burns." Contemporary evidence was unanimous on

his amazing personal charm and the magnetism of his conversation. His prose was as surprising as his poetry. Then there was his supreme quality of universal sympathy from which "every wayfarer in the journey of life may pluck strength and courage as he passes." After touching on the misunderstood, because idealistic, part which Burns took in the political movements of his day, Rosebery boldly faced the charges based on the poet's wild love affairs and his addiction to drink. He did not greatly enforce the defence, a critic might suggest, by recalling the amours of one or two well-known historical figures; or by reminding us that Shakespeare and Ben Jonson haunted the Mermaid Tavern, and that Goethe at Weimar drank bottles of Moselle. But he reached the conclusion of the whole matter in a passage of noble rhetoric, which I cannot forbear quoting in full :

"I should like to go a step further and affirm that we have something to be grateful for even in the weaknesses of men like Burns. Mankind is helped in its progress almost as much by the study of imperfection as by the contemplation of perfection. Had we nothing before us in our futile and halting lives but saints and the ideal, we might well fail altogether. We grope blindly along the catacombs of the world, we climb the dark ladder of life, we feel our way to futurity, but we can scarcely see an inch around or before us. We stumble and falter and fall, our hands and knees are bruised and sore, and we look up for light and guidance. Could we see nothing but distant unapproachable impeccability, we might well sink prostrate in the hopelessness of emulation and the weariness of despair. Is it not then, when all seems blank and lightless and lifeless, when strength and courage flag, and when perfection seems as remote as a star, is it not then that imperfection helps us? When we see that the greatest and choicest images of God have had their weaknesses like ours, their temptations, their hours of darkness, their bloody sweat, are we not encouraged by their lapses and catastrophes to find energy for one more effort, one more struggle? Where they failed we feel it a less dishonour to fail; their errors and sorrows make, as it were, an easier ascent from infinite imperfection to infinite perfection.

“Man, after all, is not ripened by virtue alone. Were it so, this world were a paradise of angels. No ! like the growth of the earth, he is the fruit of all the seasons ; the accident of a thousand accidents, a living mystery, moving through the seen to the unseen. He is sown in dishonour ; he is matured under all the varieties of heat and cold ; in mist and wrath, in snow and vapours, in the melancholy of autumn, in the torpor of winter, as well as in the rapture and fragrance of summer, or the balmy affluence of the spring—its breath, its sunshine, its dew. And at the end he is reaped—the product, not of one climate, but of all ; not of good alone, but of evil ; not of joy alone, but of sorrow—perhaps mellowed and ripened, perhaps stricken and withered and sour. How, then, shall we judge anyone ? How, at any rate, shall we judge a giant, great in gifts and great in temptation, great in strength and great in weakness ? Let us glory in his strength and be comforted in his weakness. And when we thank heaven for the inestimable gift of Burns, we do not need to remember wherein he was imperfect, we cannot bring ourselves to regret that he was made of the same clay as ourselves.”

Thirteen years later (September 15th, 1909) Rosebery journeyed to Lichfield for the celebration of the bicentenary of Dr. Johnson's birth. Most of us think of Johnson, as we do of Lamb and Dickens, as a supreme embodiment of the spirit of London ; and here Rosebery, a pioneer of London government, could feel completely at home. But Johnson also implies Boswell, the “raw, uncouth young Scot” ; and a most acute and sympathetic analysis of his compatriot's character and of his immortal work occupies a full two-fifths of Rosebery's address. It must be remembered, too, that of all the centuries the eighteenth was that which appealed the most to Rosebery's tastes and sympathies, so that he was well equipped for this task. It might be thought that of Johnson himself all has been said that can be said, but I venture to think that no critic, not Macaulay or another, has drawn a miniature portrait of the great moralist and humorist so just in outline, so mellow in tint as this. He pictures the tremendous

intellectual supremacy of Johnson, his all-embracing humanity and generosity. "He was John Bull himself"—rough in manners, insular, prepared to counter a lampoon with an oaken cudgel. "He exalted the character, of which he may be regarded as the sublime type, but he embodied the spirit." Most of all was he the master conversationalist, having read everything, able to express himself on any subject in a singular vigour of phrase, intolerant of affectation, epigrammatic, paradoxical, sometimes overwhelming. Again Rosebery concludes on a note of high seriousness. Johnson was "the great Christian soul"; his extreme conscientiousness made him fear death more than most, though when the summons came he met it with serene composure.

"Men like this are the stay of religion in their time, and for those who come after. Laymen who hold high and pure the standard of their faith do more for Christianity, it may be averred, than a multitude of priests. To say this is not to disparage the clergy; rather the reverse, for it implies that their course is regular and habitual. But their championship is felt to be the natural result of their profession and their vows, while the conspicuous layman, who is also a conspicuous Christian, has all the honours of a volunteer. No one, I think, can doubt that Samuel Johnson and William Ewart Gladstone were priceless champions of their faith, and that their places will not easily be filled. . . .

"We leave him more reluctantly than any of the dead, for he is the only one with whom we can hold converse; and so it is with the conviction that it will not be for long, as life is insipid without him. Therefore we do not say good-bye. Rather let us think that we have only paid one more pilgrimage to his shrine; for though his dust rests with a whole Sahara of various kinds in Westminster Abbey, his memory, which lives throughout the Anglo-Saxon world, is especially green in Fleet Street and in Lichfield. We salute once more with reverence to-day the memory of that brave, manly, tender soul, and pass on with the hope that from his abundant store we may draw some measure of faith and courage to sustain our own lives."

Rosebery's nearest approach to a definite literary

appreciation was made at the opening of the exhibition of Thackeray relics at the Charterhouse (June 30th, 1911). After a rapid survey of the novelist's life he discounted, no doubt unconsciously, his own treatment of Burns and of Johnson, with the words: "In the life of a man of letters his work is the one notable thing, and there is rarely much else to record." But he placed himself outside the ranks of professed critics:

"A real critic picks the plums with a knife and eats them on the blade. He has rules and a science of his own. He knows the whole business, and perhaps thinks that he could do it better. But the ordinary reader has no such pretension. He comes at last, if not at first, to be guided by the simple fact that he likes what he likes, and dislikes what he dislikes. He does not always know why; he is only conscious of pleasure or the reverse. He knows that he takes one book down a second time or a third, and leaves another to the dust.

"And so on that humble but natural footing I disclaim all pretension to discriminate except by an individual palate."

Since this particular palate is the subject of record, it must be noted that in the course of his address Rosebery illustrates his preferences and his points of criticism by touching on the works of Defoe, Fielding, Richardson, Goldsmith, "the divine Miss Austen," Dickens, Bulwer Lytton, Mrs. Gaskell, Disraeli, and Charlotte Brontë.

His uncle Lord Stanhope had observed: "Novels are read by women, even by those who read nothing else; and novels are read by men, even by those who read everything else."¹ Rosebery was not a voracious novel-reader in the sense that some statesmen have been who found their favourite relaxation in sensational fiction of light calibre, but he had been brought up among good books of every sort, and had always been familiar with every author in the above list. He was also a devoted admirer of Anthony Trollope's art, and it is to be regretted that he did not leave any written appreciation of the Barchester novels or of the political series which opened with *Phineas Finn*. His

¹ *Reign of Queen Anne* (1870), p. 565.

survey of Disraeli's writings would surely have been both wide and intimate.

The speech on Robert Louis Stevenson was a much briefer affair, less than half the length of that on Thackeray. It was delivered at Edinburgh (December 10th, 1896) at a meeting called to consider the question of a Scottish memorial to the romantic figure which had passed at Samoa two years before. Rosebery had inquired in the Press whether any such tribute was contemplated, and was therefore called on to preside. It may seem strange that he had never seen Stevenson, for he seldom missed the cream of Edinburgh culture; but comparatively little of Stevenson's Bohemian youth was spent in Edinburgh; and in any case he never would have guessed how little Rosebery thought of the starched conventions of polite life in choosing his acquaintances. In later years, after some of the famous books had thrilled the world, their author passed most of his time abroad: and after his father's death in 1887 he bade adieu to Scotland. A year later he settled in the South Seas.

It is perhaps stranger that Stevenson's father should not have made one of the Dalmeny circle of guests. In his speech Rosebery again disdains any thought of reviewing the works, but "as an outside reader" calls attention to two or three points. First an examination of the style—"something suggestive, something musical, something pregnant"—of the exquisite spirit of irony, and of the dramatic power of realistic imagination. Of these last three examples: the duel-scene of *The Master of Ballantrae*, the Italian hat of *The Pavilion on the Links*, the "two walking-sticks that I think those who have read *Treasure Island* will never forget." It was a brilliant little address, but so cursory that Stevenson the essayist and Stevenson the verse-writer are not even mentioned. It was evidently the vivid Stevenson, shining in the flashing colour of his stories, that he wanted his fellow-citizens to commemorate.

CHAPTER XVII

RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: POLITICAL ATTACKS: SLEEP-
LESSNESS: THE LIBERAL DEFEAT: DISSOCIATION
FROM HARCOURT: RESIGNATION OF LEADERSHIP.

STILL in deep snow, Rosebery was summoned to Osborne. It was a sorrowful moment, for Sir Henry Ponsonby, the mainstay of the house, was struck down with paralysis the same day, and the Queen was deeply concerned. Rosebery's audience was not difficult, and at dinner he was placed next the Queen :

"She told me positively what I have often discussed. I was telling her that I had got the foreign diplomatists to agree to my addressing them as 'Sir,' instead of 'Monsieur le Ministre,' by telling them that we so addressed our princes and kings. 'Not the King, Lord Rosebery,' said the Queen; 'the King of England is always addressed as Sire,' and then after a pause, 'Yes, I remember it well in my young days.'"

At another audience, a month later :

"She said among other things that she thought there were too many bishops in the House of Lords. It turned out that this was because of the Deceased Wife's Sister."

Throughout the year the reconstruction of 38 Berkeley Square would have left Rosebery houseless, but for the accident of office. He was thus able to join the broken line of Prime Ministers who found a home in 10 Downing Street, and lunched there for the first time late in January. His Parliamentary Dinner was given there on February 4th. But he usually did his work in the delightful room at the Privy Council Office which is allotted to the Lord President. When Downing Street was no longer his he wrote to his mother from Dalmeny (July 11th) :

"It is rapture to feel that one has no pied-à-terre in London, and so a valid excuse for remaining in the country. Were it not for my neighbours I should delay my builders."

The leaves of life kept falling. George Wyndham, the Leconfields' eldest son, the heir to many hopes, died in the middle of January, and Rosebery spent much time with the bereaved parents. Before the month ended, Randolph Churchill's troubled life closed. The ship that had never sought to sail on calm seas was "moored at last on the stormless shore." Few deaths could affect Rosebery more. They had been close friends at Oxford, Randolph slightly the younger of the pair, and intimacy had been continuous. The difference in political outlook was sufficient to be stimulating, not of the quality that vexes or alienates.

There was nothing to disturb or distract their friendship during thirty years. The two had many of the same tastes and, up to a point, a similar outlook on life, particularly public life. Each had tensely strung nerves; each had his serious side, and his definite political convictions: each had a bubbling sense of humour. The equally obvious divergences of the two characters were not of the sort that create friction. Randolph Churchill was the origin or the victim of many disputes, but no cloud ever rose between him and Rosebery. This early letter of thanks illustrates the old-fashioned formality which adorned one facet of Randolph's complex attitude to the world:

March, 1874.

"Suffer for a moment the cynical feelings, which at times I know you are fond of giving way to, to subside, and believe that I do sincerely thank you for a pledge of a friendship which is as highly to be appreciated and valued, as it is I think rarely hastily bestowed, and allow me to say that the refined good taste for which you are not unjustly celebrated is easily to be discerned in the pretty old bowl which you have so kindly sent me."

Letters and notes passed continually during the

following years, generally in a light vein like the following :

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 30th, 1886.*

"MY DEAR RANDOLPH,

"Never in the annals of civilised warfare has so inhuman an outrage been perpetrated as you committed last night.

"I do not complain of your speaking of my 'enormous and unlimited wealth' though as a matter of fact it is not enormous, and I have never had any difficulty in finding its limit. But what is monstrous is this, that in consequence of what you said thousands of mendicant pens are being sharpened. The parson's widow, the bedridden Scot born at Dalmeny, the author who has long watched my career, the industrious grocer who has been ruined by backing my horses, the poet who has composed a sonnet to the G.O.M., the family that wishes to emigrate—all these, and a myriad others are preparing for action. Not to speak of the hospital that wants a wing, the roofless church, the club of hearty Liberals in an impoverished district, the football club that wants a patron, the village band that wants instruments, all of which are preparing for the warpath. May heaven forgive you, for I cannot.

"Yrs. sincerely,
"AR."

2 CONNAUGHT PLACE, *July 1st, 1886.*

"DEAR ROSEBERY,

"Your letter is most affecting, but what can I do? You will support that old monster, and therefore you must be fleeced and fined in this world. And in the future world, well——!!!

"I am off to-morrow to Norway, post only twice a week, telegraph station 100 miles off. So I shall be well out of the way of news of these damned elections. Don't punish me by repeating this bit of news, as I have concealed it from my colleagues.

"Yours ever,
"RANDOLPH S. C."

In 1887 the Roseberys were in Rome, and heard that Randolph Churchill and Harry Tyrwhitt had just arrived. The four dined together, and Rosebery made a short memorandum of some of the talk.

Churchill spoke of himself with great frankness ; but I can only note here such parts of the conversation as affected Rosebery. One or two of them are touched on in Rosebery's memoir of his friend.

" 'Do you know, Lady Rosebery, Rosebery prevented me from becoming a Liberal? We had a long talk when Salisbury was coming in in 1885, and I agreed to call on him the next day at 1. I called, but he was out, or I should have been a Liberal.'

" 'To begin with,' I replied, 'I was in at the right time, but you were late. You were detained too long in Portland Place (Goschen). In the next place you never had any idea of becoming a Liberal. You only wanted to gain your point with Salisbury, and when you gained that there was no question of your becoming a Liberal. You only talked about it in case you failed with Salisbury. I have never mentioned that conversation to a soul.'

" 'Oh, I have, often, once to Salisbury, I think. But I thought of it seriously then, and it is impossible now.' "

This, of course, was all banter, and the talk passed on to the circumstances of Randolph Churchill's resignation, depicted by him in sparkling colours of indignation, contempt, and humour. He concluded his tirade with :

" 'There is only one place, that is Prime Minister. I like to be boss. I like to hold the reins. I told him I thought it an odious place, a sort of dunghill. Moreover a P.M. in the House of Lords was nobody. 'Perhaps that is so on the Liberal side, but not with us. Moreover if the P.M. resigns all his colleagues must go with him, but if anyone else goes (naïvely alluding to himself) he has to go alone. Then whatever you do, the P.M. gets the credit of it.'

" 'I said it was more a Churchill Government than a Salisbury Government, and that while he was making speeches and Dartford¹ programmes all over the country, Salisbury was playing a silent and secondary part.

" 'Oh, as to the Dartford speech. Salisbury came to my room in the House of Commons : I told him the whole of what I was going to say and he approved it all.' "

¹ The Dartford speech was a bold exposition of Tory democracy.

On a later occasion Churchill said :

“ ‘ I would not live the last fourteen years over again for a million a year. I have been successful enough, but I would not.’ ”

“ ‘ But you have worked very hard.’ ”

“ ‘ No, thank God, I never have. You have. You worked hard at Oxford.’ ”

“ ‘ I wish I had. But you used to read Gibbon there.’ ”

“ ‘ Yes, bye the bye, so I did. After your success as Foreign Minister you should never enter the Cabinet again except as Prime Minister.’ ”

“ ‘ But I would sooner be a Lord in Waiting.’ ”

“ He told me that I had caused the Bulgarian mess by agreeing to the term of five years.¹ I explained to him how that matter stood ; but was interested to hear that his Cabinet had adopted the view the Queen took in October.”

A final note of Churchill's conversation :

“ ‘ If there is one thing I hate and detest it is political intrigue.’ ”

“ I only replied by a solemn and deliberate wink.”

The Roseberys were soon back in England and Rosebery wrote :

THE DURDANS, EPSOM, *April 7th*, 1887.

“ MY DEAR RANDOLPH,

“ You will be glad to learn that I returned in good health yesterday, unimpaired by reading through a speech of 1 hour 50 minutes delivered at Paddington.

“ You will be even more glad to hear that I have brought with me three cigarette holders for you. I hope they are the right bore and shape. If so, I hope you will accept them as a slight memorial of an old friendship, not to be blown away like cigarette smoke.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ AR.”

After the appearance of Rosebery's *Pitt*, Randolph Churchill wrote to him a long and striking letter of praise and appreciation. He was particularly charmed

¹ See p. 270.

by "the subtle delicate irony which constantly flavours the narrative," comparing it only to the irony of Motley and of Edmond About. Rosebery replied gratefully from Naples on January 20th, 1892 :

"MY DEAR RANDOLPH,

"I was greatly pleased for a variety of reasons, just as I left England, to receive your letter. First and foremost that you had passed safely through all your perils and fatigues. Secondly that you liked my little book. And thirdly (for a genuine Gladstonian must have three heads) with the piquant interest of the letter itself.

"As to what you say of irony, I delight in About's. I do not know enough of Motley to say anything except that I think his letters the best since Horace Walpole's. But About is the modern French writer whom I think I like the best. All French irony is, I suppose, the offspring of Voltaire and some of his writings, such as *Candide*, are surely insurpassable in that respect. Heine's irony (which I know only in French) is perhaps more taking as it is mixed up with a rich vein of poetry.

"In English the irony of Gibbon always seems to me most admirable ; partly, because I seem to see the smug pig face of the author winking at me through the elaborate persiflage of some of his most pompous sentences. Then there are things in Thackeray—such as *The Rose and the Ring*—which are surely full of sparkling irony, though not perhaps so polished and sardonic as Gibbon's. I have probably forgotten the best, though these occur to me at once. Brett's article in the *Nineteenth Century* of this month carries perhaps the use of the weapon too far.

"What you say about statesmen is, I think, true. It seems impossible for a man like Pitt or even Peel (who was modelled on Pitt) to exist now in their original forms. They would of course have adapted themselves to an altered state of things, but in doing so they would probably have lost some of their power and their charm. A statesman in 1892 must I suppose have a dash of the demagogue. He has to deal with three new conditions at least :

"A democratic constituency.

"A powerful and penetrating press.

"A web of caucus.

"It is very interesting to calculate who of the various Prime Ministers of the century would best have adapted themselves to these new conditions. Perhaps Palmerston in his prime, or Disraeli. But for all that, I am not quite convinced of the correctness of the general belief that the best and most durable ministry in our democracy will resemble a well-oiled weathercock. Many ministries however will be launched and submerged before we ascertain the exact nature of our present constitution.

"Forgive this long letter on this majestic paper—adopted for purposes of economy, as a long letter takes up about six sheets of my ordinary notepaper. But it is your letter that has made mine long.

"I dashed down here last week for a little sunshine and sleep. In my three days here I have had two of summer and one thunderstorm, so my average is good. I shall soon however have to return, when I shall hope to see you—I suppose with a lateways sort of appearance.

"Yours,
"AR."

Soon afterwards Randolph was consulting Rosebery on a proposal that he should enter the London County Council, which, needless to say, came to nothing. Before the defeat of the second Home Rule measure, Rosebery listened to his friend sitting up till 1.30, "discoursing of a ministry of which Hartington was to be the head, Arthur Balfour Chancellor of the Exchequer, he India, and I F.O."

But apart from these day-dreams there was a fresh link in Randolph Churchill's accession to the Turf. His health was beginning to break down, but this new excitement seemed to add zest to his political imaginings. He wrote a long letter from Gastein on September 2nd, 1893 :

"As an old and attached friend, and to a very great extent as one who finds himself in perfect agreement with you in almost every question of foreign and domestic policy——"

The Home Rule Bill had scraped through the House of Commons. Randolph Churchill search-

ingly compared it with the measure of 1886, greatly to its disadvantage, and urged Rosebery to use his great political power in the country by "a happy combination of party loyalty, wise independent counsel, and a reasonable consideration of the arguments and views of those who dread Repeal." He was prompted, he said in conclusion, by—

"The dream which often comes upon me, that some day not very remote I may have the gratification of finding myself in the same party and holding the same opinion as you will hold. I do not even draw the line against speculations as to being, if the fates are kind, even your colleague. I send this to you with some trepidation."

Rosebery replied :

BALMORAL, *September 25th*, 1893.

"MY DEAR RANDOLPH,

"This can only be a note of apology, and thanks for your extraordinarily kind and interesting letter. I was too busy when it came to acknowledge it.

"You are quite wrong in what you say of my position—I have no position—none to speak of at all. All that I have to my credit is that people think I may be a better Foreign Minister than some other members of the present Government. But this is all—it is neutral and negative ; and this I can judge and know better than you or anybody.

"As to this policy I cannot speak with perfect freedom or frankness. But my speech is supposed at least not to have erred on the side of any want of candour, and it may sufficiently answer what you have advanced.

"When you come back we will talk all this over, but I am no letter writer. Only let me say once for all how much I was taken, and indeed touched, by your letter."

When Randolph Churchill started on his last tragic voyage, Rosebery went down to Southampton for a good-bye which might easily have been the last. A letter came from Japan, as Rosebery narrates, containing great plans for travel which never could be realised. The first page of it contained lamentations over the autumn failure of *Ladas* with unsparing

censure of the great master of training horses, Matthew Dawson, for having run the horse too often. He was just as ready to scarify a leading trainer as a leading Cabinet Minister. The handwriting is sadly tremulous, and there is something pathetic in the brave invalid's concern for his friend's racing stable. The end was nearing. He came home, and died in January 1895.¹

Years passed, and Lord Randolph's son wrote his *Life* in a fashion which astonished and delighted the world. As Rosebery said of the book: "It is one to be marked among the first dozen, perhaps the first half-dozen, biographies in our language."

Rosebery felt that there remained room for something quite different—a shorter study by a contemporary friend. Some brief records of this kind, for which the *Agricola* remains the shapely model, have a place in every library. They differ in origin and in aim: Cavendish's *Wolsey* is the tribute of a faithful follower; the two best-known examples from the nineteenth century, Carlyle's *Sterling* and Disraeli's *Lord George Bentinck*, owe more to the fame of the artists than to that of the sitters. Rosebery's *Randolph Churchill* is a portrait painted by a devoted friend on a level of absolute social and political equality. He never did anything better, or with a surer touch. The book is such easy reading, so fresh, and so stimulating, that it would be absurd to set down here any analysis of its contents or any portrayal of its manner and style.

In November of the previous year a conference was held in Downing Street on the co-ordination of the fighting services. Spencer from the Admiralty, Campbell-Bannerman from the War Office, and Rosebery himself introduced what he afterwards considered to have been the germ of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

¹ I am greatly indebted to the Duke of Marlborough for permission to examine Lord Randolph's correspondence preserved in the Blenheim archives.

It met again this year, with the addition of the Colonial Secretary, Ripon, under the name of the "Defence Committee."

A vast meeting under the auspices of the National Liberal Federation was held on January 18th, the day on which he would have wished to stand by his sister at her son's burial.

"Ten thousand people in a specially erected hall. My voice very bad. The singing simply magnificent. I never heard anything so fine."

Two-thirds of a long speech were given to the subject of Welsh Disestablishment, but he opened by thanks to his colleagues :

"Among those who have all done much strenuous and admirable work we must all enthusiastically give the first place to the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

He went on to press the campaign against the House of Lords, and to compare the difficulties of the Government with those of the Opposition. It would be tedious, now that the controversy has closed, to recapitulate his arguments, closely reasoned and illuminated by historical analogies, on the Establishment in Wales. He cited with great effect Bishop Thirlwall's speech on the Irish Church Bill when repudiating the charge of sacrilege brought against its authors.

On the following morning he talked to the Liberal Agents and Officers of the Federation. The chairman was "Tom Ellis," the Chief Liberal Whip, a Welshman of sterling quality and the utmost personal charm. His name will appear later in these pages, before the early death which robbed the Liberal party of one of its most sympathetic figures.

In the Debate on the Address (February 5th), Lord Salisbury spoke with a greater bitterness than is usual on that occasion, especially on the subject of the Reform of the House of Lords. Rosebery's reply

was adequate, but rather less animated than usual. He dwelt once more, with genuine indignation, on the Conservative Leader's neglect of any measure which would make of the House of Lords a reasonable Second Chamber.

Among the interesting events of the spring were a series of deputations to the Prime Minister on the subject of London University. A fierce struggle was being waged between those who valued the University as a purely examining body, and those who desired to make it the great centre of teaching which it has since become. There are no such gladiators as educational theorists, and Rosebery had to twit one speaker with intending to enforce his views by every means short of barricades in the streets. His conclusion was that without lowering the examination standard—this being the dread of the one party—it would be possible to frame a scheme for a single University on the model of all others in the United Kingdom—with one exception in Ireland of a different character.

Physically, Rosebery was losing ground. Facing the Opposition in the House, with his depleted party, was not agreeable, but it was a natural incident of the situation. What was not natural was the declared hostility of his colleague, the Leader in the Commons, and the consequent disruption of the party. Labouchere's attacks in *Truth* were incessant. Few of the readers of that organ can have recognised a familiar Latin tag; but Labouchere quoted in the original the most final of historical condemnations, that of the Emperor Galba, who, by universal consent, would have been fitted for the highest place—if only he had never occupied it.

Travellers from the South Seas tell how the great unarmed whale, caught unawares in shallow waters, becomes the helpless victim of its savage smaller congener, *Orca Gladiator*, backed by a ravenous crowd of thresher sharks. Such a comparison might have risen to the mind when Disraeli was assailing Sir

Robert Peel, or when Randolph Churchill was harrying the sedater leaders of his own front bench. But to apply it to Rosebery would have seemed absurd. He was a master of sarcasm no less than of grave argument; his private character was irreproachable; there was nothing in his political past to invite either ridicule or solemn censure. If a marine parallel were desired, he could have been likened to the formidable sperm whale, which no inhabitant of the ocean dare attack. But circumstances made him vulnerable. His home was lonely, for though his children were a solace, they were too young to be a support; he had the full affection, but could not have the companionship of his mother and sisters; nor could anybody turn the edge of trouble as his wife, with her calm and often humorous outlook, would often have done. Thus there was no screen between his sensitiveness and the east wind of Radical criticism.

He was in a poor state, then, to resist an attack of illness. This befell after a Royal dinner-party, at which at least one illustrious personage was suffering from influenza. Two days later, after he had presided at a Cabinet and given a large Parliamentary Dinner, the malady declared itself, and he was in bed for the best part of three weeks, it being a fortnight before he could look at a letter. On March 11th he was able to go to Windsor under the care of Sir George Murray, his always devoted private secretary.

"The Queen was very kind, insisted on my sitting down. I kissed her hand on entering and leaving. Nearly toppled over from weakness on rising the second time from my knees.

"She agreed with me in thinking Davidson of Rochester, with health, destined to Canterbury."

But recovery was tardy, and the curse of sleeplessness potent. More than a week later Murray wrote

to Sir Arthur Bigge¹ that he could give only a poor account of the patient. He had not had a good night since he had been at Epsom. Four hours' sleep the most he ever got, and it was often not more than two or three. His appetite, his spirits, and his temper were all pretty good, but if the sleeplessness lasted he must break down. The doctor thought it the most obstinate and puzzling case he had ever come across. He put it down to long-continued derangement of the digestive organs.

The Queen suggested a sea voyage, but this could not be attempted at once. Towards the end of the month there was a shade of improvement in the matter of sleep; a Cabinet was held at 38 Berkeley Square, and John Morley paid a visit to the Durdans.

"John Morley said he had pointed out to Campbell-Bannerman what great chances he had if Harcourt disappeared. 'You might be Leader of the House of Commons, a solution I rather think the Prime Minister would prefer,'—looking hard at me. I said nothing.

March 15th.—"I took the opportunity of telling J. M. that I always thought the great mistake I had made was in not insisting on Harcourt's trying his hand at forming a Government before I tried mine, and that I had given up my view under pressure from him (J. M.)."

A day or two later :

"Campbell-Bannerman came down for the day. Delightful drive with him to Boxhill."

Other colleagues came down for an hour or two, and John Burns paid a visit, but there was now and then "an evil day after a sleepless night."

The Durdans remained his headquarters through April. A visit to Newmarket to see his colt *Sir Visto*

¹ (1849–1931.) Assistant Private Secretary to the Queen, Private Secretary to King George V when Prince of Wales 1901–10, and to His Majesty from 1910. G.C.B., etc., etc. *Cr.* Lord Stamfordham 1911.

run third for the Two Thousand was followed by a Cabinet the next day.

"At 11.30 received a note from W. V. H. to say he could not attend as he had to put the finishing touches on the Budget. However at 12.30 he bounced in, had a row about Nicaragua,¹ and bounced off again, but I, John Morley, and Acland made him come back."

He was picking up strength, and at his next audience, at Buckingham Palace, declined the favour of being seated. Nobody but a cripple must sit in the Queen's presence. But at a reception at the National Liberal Club, which most of the Cabinet, including Harcourt, attended, he lost the thread of his argument, "stuck in a sentence," but was able to conclude a firmly phrased speech with an appeal not to forget the permanent and abiding obstacle of the House of Lords. On May 13th he started with Lord Spencer for a cruise on the Admiralty yacht *Enchantress* to Plymouth, Falmouth, Scilly and its flowers, Pembroke Dock, and the wooded banks of the Dart.

Uganda and the Nile valley remained bones of contention. Rosebery wrote to Harcourt (April 5th) a mildly worded letter, pointing out that consideration by a committee of experts of the Uganda Railway pledged the Government to nothing. It was quite possible that investigation might prove the financial sacrifice too great. But Harcourt, as his biographer has stated, had the poorest opinion of the future of Uganda,² and he disliked even more the apparent connection of the Nyanza area with a British claim to control the whole Nile valley. In the House of Commons on March 28th there was an important debate on the alleged French encroachments on the Niger and towards the Nile head-waters. The Conservative speakers, especially Mr. J. W. Lowther,³

¹ The trouble over Nicaragua is described above, p. 450.

² *Life of Sir William Harcourt*, vol. ii, p. 322.

³ b. 1855. Speaker of the House of Commons 1905-21. Cr. Viscount Ullswater 1921.

were not immoderate. Sir Edward Grey, in reply, categorically placed the entire Nile valley within the British and Egyptian spheres of influence, adding that a French advance under secret instructions into a territory in which our claims were known would be "an unfriendly act." In the technical language of diplomacy the phrase is of the strongest, and Harcourt, not without reason, complained afterwards that its use had not been sanctioned by him. Grey proceeded to say that everything would be done to maintain good relations with France, if the French Government and public would co-operate with this object.

But this was not the only point of dispute with France. A Commission had been appointed to delimit the frontiers of Siam and Burmah, the purpose being to secure a substantial buffer between British and French territory. This was a matter of much concern to Rosebery. To him the risk was far greater than any that could threaten the North-West Frontier, and later he wrote to Sir Donald Stewart, the Commander-in-Chief in India, that it was a mad policy to scatter our resources by lodging an army on the Chitral route while we have a frontier with France, a great military power at least as unscrupulous and aggressive as Russia is represented to be. The Indian Government, he thought, realised only one frontier question.

He addressed the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, in similar terms, objecting strongly to the occupation of Chitral so long as France was menacing India in strict alliance with Russia, for Russia would in time be tempted to fortify her frontier.

To return to the debate at the end of March, Rosebery wrote to the Queen on March 29th :

"We are, it is to be feared, approaching a situation of some gravity with regard to France, who, both in Siam and Africa, is behaving with a gross want of good faith and even of delicacy. Lord Rosebery would beg Your Majesty to read the admirable statement of Sir Edward Grey on this point last night. Lord Rosebery rather appre-

hends that the Cabinet (which meets to-morrow) may not remain unaffected by this state of things, for, as Your Majesty is aware, it contains a small but powerful section which advocates an attitude of unbounded deference to all foreign nations, more especially to France."

He had telegraphed that morning that the Cabinet might prove critical, though he hoped the crisis might be tided over.

The Queen, pleasantly ensconced at Cimiez, naturally felt some apprehension. She telegraphed back (March 29th):

"Your telegram is rather disquieting.

"While trusting that the Government will preserve a strong attitude against French encroachments, I hope crisis may be averted on national grounds, and also that personally it would be very awkward if complications arose with a country in which I am now residing and receiving marked courtesy and attention."

The alarming Cabinet passed off satisfactorily, Rosebery wrote: "for though there was some grumbling in the usual quarters, there was no attempt to disavow Sir Edward Grey's position."

He added that the small but important section of the Cabinet which he had mentioned differed so acutely with him on questions of foreign policy that they would long ago have left the Government were they not restrained by considerations of a different character dependent on other motive forces. Ultimately, at a Cabinet on May 27th, it was agreed "after a long, windy, and irrelevant discussion" on domestic slavery, that the British East Africa Company's territory from Uganda to the sea should be placed under a Protectorate. The Uganda Railway was a more difficult job. Rosebery said that its construction touched his honour and his conscience, and after a strenuous fight he carried his point.

It is necessary to dwell for a moment on Rosebery's attitude towards France. Since those days the two

countries have been united by the sacred ties of joint effort and common sacrifice ; but it would be useless to deny that forty years ago there was little love lost between France and ourselves. Private friendships abounded. Rosebery himself delighted in Paris and the society of French people. His wife's French relations treated him with the intimacy of cousins. He haunted the bookshops and was a member of two select Paris clubs. But the respective Foreign Offices disliked and mistrusted each other. The Quai d'Orsay might well resent the calm assumption of some Britons that, as the first civilising agent in the world, we are entitled to the prime share of all unoccupied territories. On the other hand, we had something to complain of. The French diplomacy of that day was not candid, and sometimes not straightforward ; but what mattered more was the poor calibre of some of the French colonial representatives. It is only of late years that French Governments have taken pains to establish a service of really excellent colonial administrators, comparable with any other. In the days of which we are speaking it was too often the abject or dissipated failures from other careers who drifted into responsible posts in the less attractive colonies of France. Consequently I have not attempted to conceal Rosebery's bitter judgments of French diplomatic action ; but it is to be noted that he was not thereby deflected towards alliance or formal understanding with any other Power. He believed that the Concert of Europe could be made to work, and that England, an active member of that Council unhampered by any formal alliances, could take a leading part in its deliberations. His Liberal critics thought differently. Sir William Harcourt, we are told, believed that England could act as a friendly policeman of a rather disorderly mob. This was all very well, but in truth it was a more arrogant attitude to take. The mob does not always obey the policeman's mandate, and it may unite and turn upon him in force. The Concert of Europe was an imperfect

instrument, but surely Rosebery's ambitions for its development came nearer to the ideal towards which the League of Nations is striving than did the vague imaginings of his opponents. Europe was not prepared to accept the preachments of an isolated peace-maker who in the past had acquired, not by peace, the choicest portions of the two hemispheres.

During the remainder of the summer session little parliamentary work fell on Rosebery's shoulders. East Africa and Uganda were still in a transitional stage, and all that happened was a short and inconclusive discussion in the House of Lords.

At the beginning of June Rosebery once more triumphed in the Derby with his colt *Sir Visto*. Strange, as he said, after waiting twenty-five years to win at all, to win twice running. Refreshed by this good fortune, though still a semi-invalid, he hired a 350-ton yacht for a cruise in the Channel, going straight to Guernsey, where he visited Victor Hugo's grave, and attended a French service, which he found quite unintelligible. Then to Herm and Alderney, where he was disappointed at seeing only one inferior cow.¹ Jersey came next, and a meeting of the States, where the Constable gracefully alluded in his speech to the Liberal Government of the Queen as having done them justice. "Indeed," Rosebery noted, "I am told they find a great difference between Liberal and Tory Governments in that respect."

Rosebery's historic sense was stimulated by the traditions of the Norman Duchy, and his romantic vein once more found expression over an island scene :

"We spent a couple of hours on Burhon Island,—a rough reef close to Alderney. I never enjoyed anything more. The blue tumultuous sea dashing among the rocks, the myriads of gulls hovering like a host of angels, the dowager puffins seated with solemn perplexity, the mass of bluebells, the inspiring air, made this a garden of Eden for fallen man."

¹ The cows spoken of in the last century as "Alderneys" were in reality Jerseys. There is no specific breed on Alderney, and any cattle on the island would be Guernseys.

On June 21st the end came. Rosebery had gone to the Durdans, and while enjoying dinner and the shortest night of the year under his veranda, received the news of the Government's defeat on the Cordite vote in the House of Commons. Should the Government resign or ask for a dissolution of Parliament? At the meeting next day, Rosebery, Harcourt, Ripon, and Tweedmouth¹ were the original minority in favour of the first course. After four hours' discussion they carried their point, Rosebery journeyed to Windsor at 6.30 p.m., his resignation was accepted, and before 9 p.m. the Queen's Private Secretary had gone in search of Lord Salisbury. Rosebery stayed at Windsor on Sunday morning, a day of religious observances. At the 8.30 service in St. George's Chapel he accidentally occupied his own Garter stall; at Matins in the Mausoleum Dr. Montagu Butler preached an admirable sermon, of which Rosebery wrote to him enthusiastically; at 3 Rosebery attended Eton Chapel, and then sadly visited his old room. He returned to London and—

June 23rd.—"Harcourt came to me spontaneously before dinner: the first time since I have been P.M."

June 24th.—"Harcourt came twice! . . . I called on Mr. Gladstone, old and cold. . . . Ripon, E. Grey, Fowler and Bryce lunched with me. . . . Asquith called on me. . . . to Willesden.² . . . The Gladstones, Tweedmouths, Mrs. Drew and G. Murray dined with me."

Troops of friends were at 10 Downing Street during the following days, and on June 28th Rosebery went to Windsor for his final audience. The Queen invested him with the Order of the Thistle, a rare distinction for a Knight of the Garter, and of course peculiarly acceptable to him.

"To London,—free. . . . To Willesden again this evening before dinner."

¹ Edward Marjoribanks, Rosebery's Christ Church contemporary, M.P. 1880-94. Succeeded as 2nd Lord Tweedmouth, 1894.

² To visit his wife's grave.

His last months of office had been undisturbed by any difficulties at Court. In May he had to tell Sir Arthur Bigge that the fatigue of writing to the Queen in a legible hand was too much for him.

"What I suggest, then, is this. Murray's handwriting is like the Chevalier Bayard, beyond reproach. But I cannot use it in writing to the Queen. So I propose that I shall sometimes dictate to him confidential letters addressed to you and signed by me and that you shall understand that these are intended to be laid before the Queen directly. Murray's letters to you signed by him will be for your own eye."

This ingenious compromise with etiquette was approved. Throughout the year the effect of Rosebery's illness on his handwriting, both in his letters and his notebooks, is painfully apparent. The change had begun to be noticeable in the previous year, and during both years the entries in his rough diaries are rarer and briefer.

Rosebery also had to take a rather painful share in the negotiations for the Duke of Cambridge's retirement from the Commandership-in-Chief, of which the full story is told in Mr. J. A. Spender's *Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*.

His final submission to the Sovereign, on the very day of taking leave of Her Majesty, was a protest against the conferring of the Order of the Garter on Oriental potentates. In spite of at least two unfortunate precedents—

"To do so is in effect to lower the Garter, to efface its great traditions, and to forget the object of all ancient Orders of Chivalry."

Rosebery was aware that the Queen held this view, as had the Prince Consort with conviction, and he wondered whether a separate class of the Star of India might not be instituted, limited to Sovereigns only. He hoped that Lord Salisbury would concur, and leave a written minute similar to this.

Thus Rosebery quitted office, for the last time, at

the age of forty-eight. He became the trusted personal confidant of the Queen's two illustrious successors, but he served neither in political place. Our English Horace of the early eighteenth century, himself versed in the diplomacy of Europe, at much the same stage of life anticipated his own epitaph :

“ High hopes he conceived, and he smothered great fears,
In a life parti-coloured, half pleasure, half care.”

Rosebery's life was indeed parti-coloured. He cherished many high hopes. He was not tormented by fears, but he perpetually had to smother doubts, for he was the head of a greatly distracted party. For the moment he was too busy to think of the future. On June 27th, in the House of Lords, he had to clear up the strange episode of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's seals, due to Lord Salisbury's characteristic carelessness in all matters not intrinsically important. At the same time furniture was removed from 10 Downing Street, and he “dressed in the caverns of Berkeley Square,” still not strictly habitable. Houseless, he gave a large dinner at the Reform Club to such unofficial friends as Bishop Davidson of Rochester, Dean Farrar, Lord Acton, Sir Alfred Lyall, and Mr. Lecky ; and there was a smoking party at the Eighty Club. There, by his own account, he spoke poorly, but the speech had an important bearing on the future. He gave up the Liberal Unionists, finally merged in the Tory ranks, and then insisted on the need for concentration of aims in the approaching struggle. In 1868, and in 1880, he reminded his hearers, victory had followed the emphasis laid on a single political issue. In 1892 “a mountain range of policy,” with illimitable peaks in the distance, had proved inadequate. Now the crucial point was the domination of the House of Lords. God forbid that such causes as Home Rule and the liquor question should be forgotten ; but with the present Upper Chamber there, these could never be carried through. His

words "the annihilation of the House of Lords" aroused frantic cheers.

There was also a great Liberal gathering at the Albert Hall, "where Asquith made one of the best speeches of the kind I ever heard." He himself, in an hour's effort, compared the treatment of Ireland by England with that of the Children of Israel by Pharaoh; and he did not forget to dot the "i's" once more in assailing the Upper House.

That Chamber provided the easiest field for a Tory rebutter of these indictments. Lord Salisbury took advantage of the last sitting of the Parliament, and on familiar lines delivered a Demosthenic condemnation of the audacious orator. Rosebery pointed out that the "annihilation" was to be of "the legislative preponderance" of the House, not of the House itself.

He had come up on purpose to reply :

"Basking in my hammock after breakfast, I saw that Salisbury was going to make an attack on me at noon. So hurried up to town, and we had a regular rough and tumble, he and Argyll and I for an hour and three-quarters."

The "rough and tumble" was not very happy or dignified. On the previous day, on a totally different subject, the Duke of Argyll had taken occasion to drag in Rosebery's speeches in the latter's absence, and to reprove him with customary ardour. Rosebery touched on this, and made a dignified reply to Lord Salisbury. Then the Duke of Argyll rose. He and Labouchere, at the opposite poles of character and of professed Liberalism, had the common gift of exciting Rosebery to a frenzy of annoyance. Accordingly, when the Duke delivered his portentous contribution to the debate, Rosebery intervened no less than seventeen times with corrections or interpellations. At the close he made a telling rejoinder, disposing of many of the Duke's points, and asking him whether he had never heard of the suspensory veto as a half-way house between the systems of two Chambers or one; but he guarded himself against adopting that policy

as his own. The squabble was pursued for some days in a series of letters to *The Times*.

The General Election brought inevitable disaster to the Liberal party. Inevitable, probably, in any case ; but made more certain by the public disunion of its leaders. Rosebery, as we have seen, placed the House of Lords Question in the forefront, and this, at any rate, would have united all sections of opinion in the country. But Morley must put Home Rule first ; and Harcourt, perhaps unconsciously incapable of following Rosebery's lead on any road, assumed that local option was the first and great commandment for the Liberal party. He lost his seat at Derby, and Morley went down at Newcastle. The Unionists met the new Parliament with a majority of 152.

This time there was nothing to make Midlothian a centre of quivering interest, so while the election was raging Rosebery hired a big yacht for a month. His faithful friend James Patten-MacDougall, secretary of the Scottish Liberal Association, and his best informant on Scottish affairs, had toured with him on the *Christine* in 1892, and now joined him on the *Santa Cecilia*. Arran was their first landing, then Ailsa Craig, Jura, and northward along that enchanted coast, hearing at Oban of Harcourt's disaster. Still northward, and able to read till 10 p.m. by natural light, to the gloomy pile of Cape Wrath, and the Orkneys—seeing Kirkwall, “gloomily and silently enjoying its annual holiday,” Scapa Bay (unwitting of its future fame) and the undecipherable Runic inscriptions of Maes Howe—“how humbling to human fame and achievement.” He over-walked, doing twenty miles in one day, with consequent loss of sleep. Back to the mainland, to Loch Laxford where “the entrance is wildness itself,—a rugged hurricane of rocks,—a petrified storm at sea.” From Oban he went straight to London (July 29th), where he talked confidentially to Wemyss Reid. The latter left a note of the conversation. Rosebery recapitulated the course of events since 1890—how he had

resolved to quit political life after his wife's death; how, at Gladstone's persuasion, he had made three speeches before the election of 1892; how these speeches were treated as a reason for his taking office; how, without his concurrence, Gladstone had named him to the Queen for the Foreign Office. In the pressure they put on him his succession to Mr. G. was openly talked of. When Gladstone retired, Harcourt came to see Rosebery, saying, "Of course we can't go on."

" 'Can't go on,' I replied. 'Here is a man of eighty-three, whose retirement has seemed imminent for years, and we are to be told that the Ministry must break up when he goes, because none of its members would serve under anybody else! That would be as bad as it was when Pitt died. For my part, if I am asked to take office under — [a respected but not pre-eminent Liberal] I shall do so.' Harcourt looked astonished, and went away. Then began a series of intrigues on his behalf, carried on by his son Loulou. Of course I do not blame Loulou, he was perfectly right to try to serve his father."

Rosebery went on to describe what followed, and came to the position as it stood. He had hoped to retire at the General Election, but his party had been pulverised, so how could he? But, he added with great energy:

"No earthly power will induce me to take part in the dishonest hypocrisy of the last year or two. Nothing will lead me again to consent to anything like a dual leadership between myself and a man whom I cannot trust . . . it may not be necessary to act during this short session, but everybody must know that the thing must come to a head."

He was dead against proclaiming any policy at this moment, and said he would only make a good-tempered general speech in the House of Lords when Parliament met. "I must endeavour to conceal my indecent joy from them."

A day or two later he told Asquith and Campbell-

Bannerman of his resolve. Asquith was strong against a letter from Rosebery to Harcourt :

“ On account of (1) the unpleasant position of the front bench in the House of Commons ; (2) it would give me the appearance of deserting the party in misfortune.”

Campbell-Bannerman went off to Marienbad, with no idea of returning for the early opening of Parliament. Rosebery could not avoid this, but he snatched another ten days yachting to Skye and Eriskay, “ a little rocky colony of Roman Catholics.”

“ We landed exactly 150 years, to a week, after Prince Charles Edward.”

The party visited some other islets to Stornoway, and thence to the Ross-shire coast.

On returning to Dalmeny (August 12th) he replied to Lord Spencer, who had written forwarding Harcourt's suggestion for a meeting at Spencer House. Rosebery formally dissociated himself from Harcourt, and sent the latter a copy with a covering note. Harcourt's answer and Lord Spencer's descriptive memorandum are given in full in the *Life of Sir William Harcourt*.¹

The simple truth was that the two men differed fundamentally on the obligations of personal and party loyalty. Harcourt had brought himself to serve under his younger colleague, and had served brilliantly. But he, and still more his son, made no pretence that the service was cheerful ; and once his own great measure was through, he cared nothing for the Government, differing, as he did, from its chief on most questions of foreign policy. When the election came, he struck out on a course of his own. On the other hand, he was a convinced party man, and he believed that the interests of the Liberal party would be best served by maintaining a pretence of agreement

¹ Vol. ii, pp. 874-7.

in Opposition. How far this was feasible he does not seem to have considered.

Rosebery, on the other hand, was not a "good" party man of the type that refuses to see a beam in the eye that gazes from the same bench in Parliament. Perhaps he was too well able to observe a mote in it. So he scouted what he considered the hypocrisy of a patched-up unanimity when the necessity for common action had vanished. The paramount rule of absolute loyalty between members of a Government had been altogether outraged, he felt. For, though a poor partisan, he was staunch to any combination of which he was a declared unit. So the breach between him and Harcourt was never closed.

The "good-tempered" speech on the Address in reply to what Rosebery called the jejune Speech from the Throne first touched on external affairs. The late Government had decided that the occupation of Chitral would not add to the security of the Indian Empire. What was wanted for that Empire was concentration, financial and military. Was the army there to be increased? Then there was the French advance on the Mekong to enforce the need of concentration. As to the General Election, he reminded the Government that the majority of 152 was really a majority of but 14, on the proportion of votes. That was not discouraging to Liberals. Coming to Ireland, he had never thought of withdrawing his phrase about the "predominant partner," but he felt that conviction would be brought to the heart and mind of that partner, for, in Macaulay's phrase, the Union remains a union only in name. Lord Salisbury's reply was largely devoted to a vindication of the House of Lords, and, on Ireland, he merely had observed in Rosebery's speech a not indistinct indication that he projected shaking off the incumbrance of Home Rule.

Rosebery started for Scotland, and spent much of the autumn at Dalmeny, with a visit to Dunrobin, and one to Doncaster, where *Sir Visto*, after a terrible

alarm of lameness from his having been cast in his box, won the St. Leger in good style. A sign of coming revolution was : " This year for the first time pot hats were generally worn,—even by the Duke of Cambridge."

These were interludes, for the Liberal camp was still agitated by the leaders' dissensions. In October Wemyss Reid was at Dalmeny, and set his impressions on paper at full length, mainly describing the place and the social existence, but recording some political talk, much on the lines of his earlier conversation.

A series of Liberal functions took Rosebery to Scarborough (October 17th). On one day they lasted without intermission from 12.30 p.m. to 1.30 a.m.—a full measure of Yorkshire enthusiasm. Here he opened up the policy which later was to get him into trouble with some of his friends, that of the need of educating and reorganising the Liberal party, and of avoiding long indigestible programmes. But he repeated his censure of the House of Lords, and his mistrust of the Government's Indian policy.

Soon afterwards, in London, he saw Lord Spencer, on the eve of departure for a tour in India.

" I am afraid I disappointed him by remaining quite clear and firm in my attitude. He seemed to go further than usual in saying that on a clear call of duty he might undertake the leadership."

He was at Hawarden in November (20th), finding his host very well, and ready to talk till midnight. Mrs. Gladstone was rather feeble, and on the morning of his departure Rosebery noted :

" Had a long talk with Mrs. G. in bed and Mr. G. . . . Both very affectionate."

There was nothing cheering in the political prospect, and it was a pleasanter occupation to preside at the annual meeting of the Scottish Historical Society

(October 29th). Scottish history enthralled him; and, as will be seen later, it was the favourite fare of his book-collector's appetite. In his address he revelled in the prospect of reading the back volumes of the Society's issue, now that he was a free man; and he dwelt with delight on the number of small books of family and parochial history which were being poured out in Scotland as a mark of the spirit of the times.

November saw him starting for Paris, and thence he passed to Madrid. After two days he went on to Seville, always turning southward when he could. Ever attracted by the unusual, he was escorted more than once by his friendly host Mr. Johnson, the Vice-Consul, to watch the dance of gaily attired choirboys, "Seises," before the high altar. He brought back an oil painting of this strange survival of semi-paganism on holy ground. On one occasion the dance was diversified by the advent of a dog before the altar. On his return to Madrid he breakfasted with Señor Castelar off national dishes, meeting various deputies and Joaquin Ferrer, the host's secretary. For the last week of the year Rosebery returned to Dalmeny.

The New Year, as it happened, started on a warning note. In the previous autumn opinion had been stirred by tales of fresh outrages inflicted on Armenians in Turkey, and the Foreign Office had to admit their truth, with the utter deadlock in the matter of reforms. Rosebery was asked by correspondents the reason for his silence in face of these facts. He replied that he was haunted by the horrors of Asia Minor, which called for vengeance as loudly as those which moved Milton's great appeal. But the knowledge and the responsibility rested with the Government, who exercised a dictatorship before which he could only bow until they could be called to account in Parliament. That occasion came on February 11th, and Rosebery commented on "the curt and cold paragraph" of the Queen's Speech dealing with Armenia. He spoke bitterly of "the spirit of edify-

ing humility, the spirit of a Christian statesman," in which Lord Salisbury had bowed to the wishes of the Sultan. He himself was proud of the Opposition for having refrained from denouncing the Government in hopes that brave words would be followed by brave deeds. He recalled the promises of 1878, made at continual banquets, of good government for the Turkish provinces. Now we were told that the Treaty of Berlin contained no promise or guarantee. "By a strange irony of fortune it devolves on the noble Marquess, who partly blew that bubble then, to prick that bubble to-day . . . this is where we stand as the result of 'Peace with honour'—in an elaborate impotence, elaborately declared." He went on to describe the apathy and degradation which had taken the place of the age of crusades. It was perhaps the most scathing speech that he ever made in the House. Lord Salisbury had to admit that the Powers would not allow the use of any pressure but that of persuasion and influence, and tried to speak hopefully of methods of which he must have known the utter futility. But the force at the back of his weak-sounding plea was the knowledge that the country, however indignant, would not go to war alone. The Duke of Argyll twitted Rosebery with having kept silence about the Armenian troubles for eleven months of his Premiership, and with the marked coldness of feeling in dispatches while his Government was in power.

Throughout the summer the miseries of Armenia continued to excite sympathy and rage in Britain. Questions were frequent in both Houses. In May the Duke of Argyll, just recovering from a serious illness, made an indignant protest, and Rosebery seized the occasion to assure his untiring antagonist of the pleasure with which the House welcomed his return. Speaking at Newton Abbot soon afterwards, Rosebery denounced the Cyprus Convention as a fraud and a sham, and Lord Salisbury's failure to continue that concurrence with the Powers for the

suppression of outrages for which Rosebery was working when he left office.

Autumn came, and nothing was done to save the Armenians. The veteran crusader of Hawarden once more buckled on his armour, and spoke at Liverpool (September 14th), in the trumpet tones of 1876. He would break off relations with Turkey, and do what we could directly to repress the local outrages. This seemed to involve armed intervention; but he added that if a European war was threatened it might be necessary for us to recede from that mode of action. The reaction on Rosebery's position of his old leader's reappearance will be noted in due course. Meanwhile there were other grave matters touching the honour of the Empire. The Jameson Raid from Bechuanaland into the Transvaal coincided with the New Year, and the German Emperor's telegram of congratulation to President Kruger helped to silence many Englishmen for whom filibustering in itself had no attraction. At Rochdale (April 29th) and at Newton Abbot (May 15th) Rosebery did not spare Chamberlain's "new diplomacy," which had invited the President here for discussion by a dispatch which unfortunately reached the newspapers before it reached Pretoria, and recommended a policy which Kruger immediately repudiated. And then—

"In the vigorous practice of the new diplomacy, the Colonial Secretary went to a public dinner, and said that the administration of President Kruger, the gentleman he had invited to England and whom he was anxious to conciliate, was eminently corrupt. That is a very new diplomacy indeed. A greater comedy of errors was never achieved by any diplomacy, either new or old."

In the second speech (May 15th) he insisted on the need for prompt and searching inquiry—for the sake of the accused themselves, and for the clearing of our national character, freely accused in Europe of complicity in the raid. He thought the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee a great mistake.

The problem of inquiry came up in Parliament (June), and the Government seemed to take it lightly. Rosebery observed that nobody who watched the course of foreign opinion could help seeing how the feeling that finds expression in the phrase *perfidie Albion* had been deepened by what had taken place. The inquiry was a travesty and a mockery.

The Parliamentary Committee was appointed at the close of the session, but of course could do nothing till the following year. Its history does not greatly concern this book, but few will dispute Rosebery's condemnation of its appointment. It proved to be an admirable machine for smothering most of the relevant facts.

After Nicaragua, Venezuela. The frontier between that state and British Guiana had been a matter of contest for years, and almost at the moment of the Jameson Raid, President Cleveland, the Democratic chief, had issued a message invoking the Monroe Doctrine against this country. It included an extravagant pretension to appoint a United States Boundary Commission. This was treated as *non avenue*, and we were on the brink of war with the Union. Rosebery was anxious that nothing should be said admitting that the interests of the United States were affected, or that the prolonged occupation of part of the disputed territory should be a factor in the proposed arbitration.

Always glad to keep foreign affairs free from party, he asked Sanderson¹ to come and see him from the Foreign Office—

“and laid before him my suggestion for getting a friendly Power to offer its good offices between the U.S. and us. Both countries had got into an *impasse* like two great waggons in a deep narrow lane. I saw no other dignified way out. No one, Lord Salisbury might be assured, would know of my having made the suggestion.”

¹ Sir Thomas Sanderson (1841–1924). Private secretary to successive Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs. Permanent Under-Secretary 1894–1906. Cr. Lord Sanderson 1905. G.C.B.

The negotiations dragged on through the summer, and a satisfactory conclusion was deferred till the autumn.

Meanwhile, Rosebery continued to find his personal position less and less tolerable. His last few months of office had run more smoothly, as in February 1895 he had called a Cabinet to announce that he must resign unless he were better supported in the House of Commons. Kimberley thought this "an amazing announcement," and that his colleagues' confidence in his judgment was seriously shaken.

" 'His extreme sensitiveness to personal attacks indicates a certain weakness in his character,' his older friend noted, adding that 'Harcourt joined in deprecating Rosebery's resignation, but his talk was that the sooner we were driven out of office the better.'"

On this Rosebery commented some time later :

"His amazement shows that the device was successful. It would of course not have been possible for me to resign ; but it was the only way in which I could restore any discipline, or deal with the open and insulting disloyalty of one member of the Cabinet at least. This had come to a head on, I think, the previous evening, which had been entirely devoted to attacks on me while the Government sate silent. This shameful exhibition had excited great comment, for the silence of the Government under such circumstances was much more damaging than the attacks of my foes. So I called a Cabinet to play the last card left to me, and on the whole it succeeded."¹

Just before the meeting of Parliament in the current year eight of Rosebery's former colleagues came to Mentmore, with Sir E. Grey and Tom Ellis. There was some useful talk after dinner about Education and about Armenia, and a few days later he held a conference in Parliament Street with the

¹ In the debate on the Address, Leonard Courtney, Dilke, and Labouchere had assailed Rosebery in unmeasured terms, with copious citations from his speeches in the House of Lords ; Campbell-Bannerman had denied any divergence between the Prime Minister and his colleagues, but Harcourt had left the attacks unnoticed.

principal Party organisers. He was invited to meet the Scottish Members of Parliament at dinner, and, on another occasion, to meet leading Nonconformists, clerical and lay. They gathered to salute the Liberal leader, all unconscious of such a note as he made on June 21st at the Durdans :

"The anniversary of the late Government being beaten. Sitting under the veranda at 9 p.m., the exact time and place where I received the telegrams, we drank a joyful glass."

He spoke at the City Liberal Club (July 27th), declaring politics to be in a state of flux, and laying stress on the mutual independence of the Liberal and Irish parties. This went too far for Lord Ripon, who objected to such a categorical declaration, in a long talk at Studley : "Very friendly, sincere, and single-minded" was Rosebery's impression. Rosebery spoke briefly at the second reading of the Irish Land Bill, but took little part in its prolonged Committee stage.

Confidential.

38 BERKELEY SQUARE, *August 6th, 1896.*

"MY DEAR SPENCER,

"I have been thinking very carefully over the situation of our Party in the House of Lords with reference to the Irish Land Bill.

"As you know, my view has been that every man should be a law to himself in that matter, and that it was undesirable to take action as a Party, or to issue a whip. Under this principle I have to consider what I shall do myself, and after the best consideration I have been able to give to the matter, I have come to the strong conclusion that I should not endeavour to prevent the defeat of the Government by its own supporters, if such defeat be imminent (as it is). The Government has not deserved any such service at our hands, and they have besides the power of reversing in the House of Commons by the enormous majority of their own supporters any votes that the House of Lords may give in antagonism to them. And, if defeated, *an object lesson of the working of the House of Lords* will be furnished infinitely more effective than any speeches that any Liberal could make.

"I know of nothing to weigh against all these considerations, so therefore, as far as I am concerned, I shall make no effort to assist the Government this evening. *But I do not attempt in the slightest degree to influence you* : you occupy in regard to Irish questions a different position to mine.

"Y. sincerely,
"AR."

At last the Uganda Railway was to be made. "One of the rare, but none the less grateful questions on which both sides of the House are agreed," said Rosebery. This was true of the House of Lords at any rate; and the claim advanced both by him and by Lord Salisbury that its construction would prove a death-blow to the slave trade has been abundantly vindicated. Every previous traveller in East Africa had observed, with helpless indignation, slave caravans working their way to the coast for shipment. At Dalmeny he drew up the following memorandum :

August 25th, 1896.—"There will be I suppose this autumn calls for a definite Liberal policy. Any such calls will be in my opinion premature, and, as far as I am concerned, futile.

"In the first place, any promulgation of policy is too soon after the last election and too long before the next election. This consideration is in itself conclusive to my mind.

"But, secondly, the Liberal party needs very tender handling just now. Its personal difficulties for the moment can scarcely be exaggerated. Declarations of policy from leader would *ipso facto* elicit violent contradictions. These disputes, besides having the unpleasant effect of washing dirty linen in public, would dishearten Liberals, and discourage Liberal Unionists—disgusted with the Tory party—from returning to us. But, what is most important, they would distract attention from the incredible blunders of the Government. They would, so to speak, draw a red herring across the trail of the Government—a feat useful to them and disastrous to us.

"In another respect too the Liberal party requires tender handling even more. It is impossible for the Liberal party to remain nailed to the innumerable political propositions lightly accepted by Mr. Gladstone for the promotion of his Irish Policy. The party needs to make a new start and to shed much of this—which may be desirable in the abstract

or may not—but which by its bulk and multifarious aggressiveness constitutes an encumbrance—not an inspiration or assistance. The party will have, in order to be successful, to concentrate itself on one or two points—possibly of the former policy, possibly not. But this necessary reconstruction of policy and therefore of party is a delicate and gradual process, even if there were no personal difficulties beside.

“As regiments shattered in battle have to be reconstructed by some sort of screen, so our party needs something of the kind for the present. That shelter has been abundantly furnished by the present Government. Their inconceivable blunders furnish an abundant topic for Liberal concentration and attack.

“I believe that the best chance for the Liberal party lies much more in reaction from the present Government than in any gospel of its own. The present Government is the first Tory govt. since 1867: weakly and distractedly Tory no doubt, but compelled to be Tory by the brute force of its majority. Since 1867 Conservative Governments have not openly opposed Liberal policy (except in Ireland): they have competed not unsuccessfully at an auction of Liberal measures. Now their majority robs them of all excuse for not being Tory, and, reluctantly I think, Tory they are.

“This is an immense advantage to the Liberal party, because it forces real Liberals back to that party, and helps on the process which all true Liberals must have at heart—the restoration of the Liberal party to what it was in richness, variety and strength before 1886. That work would even now be in full operation but for two circumstances: the distracted condition of the Liberal front bench, and the Irish question. Neither of these fall within the scope of this memorandum, the sole moral of which is that the Liberal party should devote itself to exposing and impressing on the electorate the preposterous policy and blundering of the Tory Government—in a word to ‘rubbing it in!’”

There was thus nothing definite to prepare friends or foes for the bombshell which exploded on October 8th, when this letter to Tom Ellis was issued:

DALMENY, *October 6th, 1896.*

“MY DEAR ELLIS,

“The recent course of events makes it necessary to clear the air. I find myself in apparent difference with a con-

siderable mass of the Liberal party on the Eastern question, and in some conflict of opinion with Mr. Gladstone, who must necessarily always exercise a matchless authority in the party ; while scarcely from any quarter do I receive explicit support.

" This situation, except as regards Mr. Gladstone, is not altogether new, but in saying this I complain of no one. I regret only that I should appear to divide the energies and try the faith of Liberals. This question, however, is above and beyond personal considerations.

" When I speak, which I do this week, I must speak my mind, and speak it without reference to party. Under these circumstances it is best for the party and myself that I should speak not as a leader, but as a free man. I consequently beg to notify you that the leadership of the party, so far as I am concerned, is vacant, and that I resume my liberty of action.

" I can only feel the deepest gratitude and regret in parting from you and those who, like you, have given me such loyal co-operation under circumstances so difficult.

" Believe me, my dear Ellis,
Yours very sincerely,

" ROSEBERRY."

Here is the story :

October 7th.—" I sent for the Central News man and gave him my letter for publication at 8 p.m. to avoid the evening newspapers. To bed early. At 1 William arrives like Lady Macbeth with an agonised telegram from Cook of the *Daily News* begging to be authorised to contradict the fatal rumour."

October 8th.—"A good deal of fuss about my resignation. Mr. Harmsworth¹ came to interview me. I lunched him instead. An interesting young man.

" Asquith came to luncheon. He behaved as always extremely well, but complained a little :

" (1) of no one having been consulted. (I explained to him that this was of the essence of the matter.)"

October 8th.—" Fowler also arrived to stay."

October 9th.—" At 6 to the Empire Theatre to make my fateful speech. So behindhand that I was scribbling the last heads or argument as the carriage was waiting, long after the

¹ Alfred Harmsworth, *cr.* Lord Northcliffe 1905 and Viscount Northcliffe 1918.

others had gone. But it went off well enough—indeed too well—as the Empire Theatre was so conversational to speak in that I lasted for nearly two hours.

“Home to supper. What a relief!”

None of the four thousand hearers of the speech could doubt the sincerity of the whole and the emotion that inspired a great part of it. His notes, more copious than usual, cover thirteen half-sheets of large notepaper. He looked tired and anxious, and the audience, warm in its greeting, showed signs of tension unlike the customary uproar of such mass meetings. Rosebery covered the whole field of the Turkish difficulty, saying, amid loud cheers, that in foreign politics he had never known party, pointing out the essential difference between the existing position and that of 1876, and dealing with the various policies now advocated.

“I am obliged to differ from Mr. Gladstone on this question (some cheers, and a voice, ‘Good old Rosebery’). But we differ as friends (loud cheers). This morning only I had a long and affectionate letter from him, in answer to the announcement of my resignation, which I shall always cherish. Whatever our differences of opinion may be, they never could alter the veneration, the unbounded respect, the deep affection with which I regard him.”

When, seventeen years ago, Rosebery continued, he had spoken of the great statesman fighting the battle of liberty at an advanced age, he little thought that he would see a still nobler sight, the same statesman, fuller still of years and if possible still fuller of honour, leaving his well-earned retirement to fight one more battle for the principles for which his life had been spent.

Rosebery’s “only panacea for dealing with the Eastern question is concerted action of the Powers.” All the Powers, if possible, but at any rate all those directly interested. Oliver Cromwell, who had been invoked to justify isolated action, had in fact proceeded solely by diplomatic methods.

Rosebery passed on to speak of his resignation. It was not solely the result of differences on the Armenian question. That was the last of a series of incidents. A Liberal leader if a Peer could only succeed if he received very exceptional support (loud cheers, and a voice, "Which you never got"), very exceptional loyalty, and very exceptional co-operation inside and outside Parliament "to make up for his own inherent deficiencies." His resignation was for one object alone, "to promote unity." At the close of his speech he thanked his colleagues, naming those who were on the platform; and after disposing of a rumour that Asquith had not heartily supported him, went on:

"Consummate and considerable as are his powers of brain, in my opinion his head is not equal to his heart. And it is that rare combination of head and heart which in my humble judgment, if my prophecy be worth anything, will take him to the highest office of the State."

Even more affectionate was his expression of thanks to Ronald Munro Ferguson: "We have been more like elder and younger brother than like Minister and Secretary," as all who had seen them together knew to be the truth. These were the farewells of a political death-bed, "this solemn moment," as the speaker himself called it. But the party collected round the patient's couch had no intention of attending his political funeral, as the events of the next ten years were to prove.

Rosebery had written to Mr. Gladstone on the day of his resignation as follows:

Confidential.

DALMENY, October 7th, 1896.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"I wish you to know from myself that I have resigned the leadership of the Liberal party—that is, if I ever held it, of which I am not quite sure!

"I will not disguise that you have, by again coming forward and advocating a policy which I cannot support, innocently and unconsciously dealt the *coup de grâce*; by

enabling discontented Liberals to pelt me with your authority. But, as you well know, the situation has long been almost impossible and almost intolerable, and I for one am glad that it should cease.

"I hope that my retirement may at any rate produce some greater amount of unity in the distracted and honey-combed party called 'Liberal.'

"My love to Mrs. Gladstone.

"Yr. affte.

"AR."

Mr. Gladstone sent a long answer by return of post, and a short one two days later. In the first he said :

"I cannot at this date regard your resignation as an accomplished fact : and you may find you have a stage yet to travel. . . . And now I turn to that with which I should perhaps have begun. Your letter is an acknowledgement of receipt for a stab under the fifth rib : and regarded in that view it is not only kind, but kindness itself. I can desire nothing more than to follow it. Our political relations have been tragical enough : but you have prevented their carrying any infection into the personal sphere. Will it surprise you when I tell you that my first knowledge of a difference between us was when I read the letter stating that sole action meant European war ? "

Mr. Gladstone went on to explain that he had believed Rosebery to be not warm, but concurrent or acquiescent in his policy, and he thought that Salisbury was much in his sense, though with few or no friends in his Cabinet. The movement in the country had been all that he himself could expect or desire.

Looking back to those days, one cannot but grievously admire the generous faith that mistook popular indignation against the merciless Sultan for willingness to engage in a crusade of which no one could foresee the progress or the end.

In his second letter, after reading the speech, the old chief wrote :

"After what you said of me last night I would, if I could, add to the acknowledgements contained in my letter of Thursday as to our personal relations."

Both letters ended as usual, "Yours affectionately."

Other ex-colleagues wrote laments and expostulations—Ripon doubted whether, from a public point of view, the Armenian business should have been treated as the main ground for resignation, and added :

"You have handed us over to Harcourt without escape, and you are not ignorant of all which that means."

Arnold Morley looked forward to soon seeing Rosebery leader again ; warm-hearted Tom Ellis wrote :

"Fourteen days have passed by since you wrote to me the two letters which filled me with pain and sadness. I have been finding it more and more difficult to give any adequate expression to the keenness of the regret I feel at the circumstances which drove you to the decision and at the momentous decision itself. I had nursed the hope that it could have been warded off. I had returned to the stillness of my home in Wales from Dalmeny, with my mind very full of the difficulties of the situation but with a new confidence that with patience the difficulties might, with Time's help, be surmounted. Those days at Dalmeny were among the very happiest of my life. I had caught a sort of infection of happiness from the children and from our candid and earnest talks. On my return I quietly thought over them and made all sorts of plans for the future.

"Your letter and your great speech seem to show that the decision was inevitable. But I cannot even now admit it, and my mind constantly rebels against the assumption that it was inevitable. But every hour's reflection upon the new situation created by the decision only serves to emphasise my regret and my sadness. The sense of desolation grows on me.

"The kindness of your personal letter to me—a kindness which I shall never forget—increases my sense of desolation. For I recall your thousand kindnesses to me, the joy of discussing with you plans and difficulties and obstacles, the inspiration which you gave me in my work and in my life, and I realise how you kindled admiration and devotion in those who came into contact with you. I recall the many plans and schemes which many of us talked over and worked at in order to help you as Leader of our Party.

"And now we have to strive to put the best face on things,

to work without devotion and without much hope. We have to try to say and assume that all will go well with the Party when in our inmost hearts we are depressed and torn with doubts and misgivings.

"Let me thank you heart and soul for all your kindness to me. It will be a great joy to me if at any time I can be of any service to you.

"Believe me, dear Lord Rosebery,

"Your sincere and faithful

"TOM ELLIS."

Shaw Lefevre¹ was warmly sympathetic, doubting the possibility of leadership for a Liberal Peer in Opposition; Arthur Acland,² out of health and himself the object of many attacks in the Press, felt sure that so deliberate and grave a step must mean something very definite; Spencer, to whom Rosebery had written hoping that he would lead the Opposition in the Lords, deprecated this possibility, and assured Rosebery that he had not lost the confidence of Liberals in the country, but confessed himself puzzled by the resignation; Herschell wound up a long and friendly letter with the hope that Rosebery would still work for the party :

"If you were to withdraw yourself from politics it would be said : ' See, he cared not for Liberal principles, but only to be leader of the Liberal party ; as soon as this becomes impossible his ardour cools, and he no longer cares to fight the Liberal battle.' However untrue this might be, it would have enough semblance of truth to find credit with many."

Campbell-Bannerman, returning from Australia, congratulated him on securing the sympathy and appreciation of all parties and countries, and of by far the larger number of Liberals :

"One may say *felix opportunitate demissionis* ; for the prudent view of the Armenian question blends satisfactorily

¹ (1881-1928.) M.P. 1863-95. First Commissioner of Works 1880 and 1892. President Local Government Board 1894-5. *Cr.* Lord Eversley 1906.

² (1847-1926.) M.P. 1885-99. Vice-President for Education 1892-5. Succeeded as thirteenth Baronet 1919.

with the implied protest against disloyalty of the domestic kind . . . and there is some irony in the fact that the ex-Prime Minister whose main alleged fault in the eyes of some one could name was that he was too Jingo, Imperialist, and Great Englander, resigns because he cannot agree with those of his followers who are willing to plunge us in a wanton war."

A letter from his friend the editor of the *Westminster Gazette* gave him peculiar pleasure ; he wrote in reply :

Private.

NEWMARKET, October 13th, 1896.

" MY DEAR SPENDER,

" I was too tired and too shy to say what I wished to say yesterday. Let me send a line of thanks to you, then, for your constant able and spirited support of me through these arduous times. I shall always think of you as a friend—whatever the future may have in store.

" Always,

" Yrs. sincerely,
" AR.

" Would you send me six copies of last Saturday's *Westminster* ? It was the only thing that almost persuaded me that I had made a fairly good speech."

The story of this resignation has been given at length for two reasons. In the first place, it illustrates some of Rosebery's strength and a touch of his weakness—the strength, the capacity for prompt action at need and for eloquent defence of that action ; the weakness, the failure to make generally clear the motives that inspired the action. Secondly, it was the outward and visible demonstration of the truth long apparent to initiates, that the gulf between the two sections of the Liberal party, roughly distinguished as Imperialists and Little Englanders, was steadily widening. As always happens in such disputes, the wildest partisan utterances were treated as confessions of faith by either hostile group. All Imperialists bore the burden of Alfred Austin's fatuous lines on the Jameson Raid ; all their opponents were

accused of callous indifference to the fate and fortunes of their fellow-countrymen overseas. Rosebery's Imperialism was of the sanest brand, in few ways differing from that of Kimberley, or Campbell-Bannerman, or Bryce, or Ripon, though less confident than the last in the early capacity of the coloured races for self-government. In the opposite ranks, Harcourt and John Morley were not in truth careless of the Empire, but they seemed to involve in a common condemnation the invasion of land speculators and mining syndicates with the efforts of genuine pioneers and the new consciousness of nationhood in the minds of overseas settlers. In Imperial matters they and many of their followers were strictly Conservative; there was a great deal more Radicalism and more Home Rule inherent in the Imperialist creed, when it was held by sensible men.

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CHAPTER XVIII

PRESSURE FROM POLITICAL FRIENDS: HERBERT
BISMARCK: THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR: THE
CHESTERFIELD SPEECH: CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN

THE ordinary current of what should have been a placid year was ruffled by all these political emotions. At its very start it was troubled by a great personal loss in the sage friendship of William Rogers. At the New Year he was too ill to be visited, but he rallied before the end and faced it in humorous tranquillity.

January 15th.—"To Rogers—calm and cheerful. He had realised 'that he had not above ten years to live.' Wished to live in a flat at the West End."

Four days later Rogers died, leaving a gap in Rosebery's life that nothing could fill. In the same week he lost another good friend in Henry Calcraft. He was a good-humoured version of Charles Greville; a most capable Civil Servant,¹ well read, caustic in speech but kind of heart, and a favourite in whatever London could claim as its Faubourg Saint-Germain.

Critics thought that Rosebery's political speeches of 1896 reached a higher level than any before, and the same was true of his other addresses of the year. Those on Burns at Dumfries and Glasgow, and on Robert Louis Stevenson at Edinburgh, are separately noticed. But he also presided (November 26th) when Mr. Herbert Paul enlightened Edinburgh on Parliamentary Oratory, "in one of the most brilliant and fascinating addresses that I have ever had the fortune to hear," Rosebery said in replying to a vote of thanks. He pointed out the risk that in Parliament a fine debate, rather than agreement and persuasion, might tend to be the object aimed at.

¹ He was Permanent Secretary to the Board of Trade.

Rosebery again took the chair (December 7th) when Sir Walter Besant lectured on the History and Greatness of London, as the moral progenitor of the People's Palace had the best right to do. Rosebery pressed the County Council to found an historical department which would commemorate the houses of famous men—a hint taken later on; and he did not forget to dilate on the problem of London administration, the greatest of all problems for statesmen, he thought, and one generally ignored.

He had been in Spain for ten days in the early summer, again basking at Madrid, Granada, and Seville. He loved nightingales, and in their season he drove out most evenings from Epsom to listen beside the Surrey copses. At Granada "the finest nightingale in Spain" was offered to him for 200 pesetas. After flatly refusing to sing when talked to by its owner's little boy, it was sent to pass the night in Rosebery's room. The next day, "Chiquito a failure, not having sung a note. He has returned home. The theory is that weather has to do with it, and that nightingales will not sing in thunder." Probably after his return he did not regret the company of the poor little captive.

Rosebery summed up his Spanish impressions in a letter to a friend:

"The more I see of Spain the more I like it—better, I think, than Italy, though the people are not so gay as the Italians. But the Spaniards are so casual, so fiery, so lazy, so cynical, and so superstitious that they have the charm of a perpetual puzzle. And then they scorn civilization as much as J. J. Rousseau!"

While he was away, the Prince of Wales's *Persimmon* won the Derby, just beating *St. Frusquin*, owned by Leopold de Rothschild, to whom the Durdans had been lent for the week.

"My Durdans party must be a sad one, and I am sad in sympathy. When I said to my servant John that I sup-

posed everyone would believe that every horse had been stopped to enable the Prince of Wales to win the Derby, he replied, 'No doubt, but I am bound to tell your Lordship that many people thought the same thing when *Ladas* won, and you were Prime Minister ! ' "

At Seville there were the Corpus Christi processions. More solemn and imposing, he thought, than "the scratch collection of richly clad idols at Easter." He saw a thrilling bull-fight, and for the first time in his life a cock-fight—"a stupid, beastly sight . . . the fascination lay in the audience all standing up at once, screaming offers to bet all at once—a scene for Goya or Velasquez. I missed the central passive figure in Hogarth's print."

Most of the autumn was passed in Scotland, both before and after the political crisis. Before going north he shot grouse with Lord Ripon. On one day the four guns killed nearly 1,200 birds, of which the amazing Lord de Grey accounted for more than half. Rosebery, excellent performer though he was, was limited to a quarter of the total, being handicapped by the break-down of his dog. He also shot grouse in Scotland, and secured two or three stags at Dunrobin. But there were many quiet weeks at Dalmeny with the children. On one Sunday he took his sons, now at Eton, to a Free Church in Edinburgh. The preacher chose the tale of Onesimus, saying that he fled to Rome, where an escaped slave might find good hiding. One of the boys very pardonably heard the phrase as "a good hiding."

Before the year closed he was in Paris for a few days, coming across John Morley and with him wandering to book-shops and harrowed by the Conciergerie. Not a word of politics.

He was invited for a night to Windsor, where the Queen said :

" ' I wanted to write to you after your speech, but I heard you were coming to Abergeldie. Then, you did not

come, and I thought it perhaps better not to write. But I thought it very good and very patriotic. They treated you very badly. Sir William, and I believe Mr. Morley too.' I waved this off."

In December he attended the City Liberal Club for a presentation to an esteemed official :

"A genial gathering. My last public engagement in the world."

But many active political friends were among the guests at Mentmore, determined not to let him go.

The Address in the House of Lords was moved on January 19th. Lord Kimberley, once again leader of the Opposition, lamented Rosebery's absence, and paid the inevitable compliments. The Prime Minister was no less eulogistic :

"The noble lord is a man exceedingly popular in private life, and, I think, not less popular in public life, and the ability with which he conducted a position of exceeding difficulty won the sympathy of all. . . . He made a most patriotic and, I may say, a most useful and beneficial speech. I should be inclined to add that I do not see why that speech should involve his retirement from the leadership of his party."

In Rosebery's own judgment it also involved temporary retirement from the House of Lords, for he did not open his lips there throughout the session. Lord Salisbury's speech became famous from a sentence about Russia and Turkey in 1853, before the Crimean war :

"Many members of this House will keenly feel the nature of the mistake that we made when I say that we put all our money on the wrong horse."

The fruits of that unlucky investment remained, and one of them was served up this year, when the Cretans rose in rebellion,¹ and the Greeks sent ships

¹ This was the first appearance in active life of Monsieur Venizelos.

and troops to help them. A Ministerial Statement (February 15th) favoured autonomy for Crete within the Turkish Empire, and the withdrawal of troops of both Greece and Turkey was to be enforced by the Powers if necessary. This declaration was discussed soon afterwards in the House. Kimberley boldly advocated the junction of the island to Greece. Lord Salisbury assured the House that Crete would in any event be withdrawn from the arbitrary power of the Sultan. No more could be done without agreement with the Powers. But some of Rosebery's henchmen felt that he ought to be in the fray. Telegrams followed him abroad, and Cook of the *Daily News* wrote strongly urging him to speak out. He had already indited a memorandum defining his position and intentions :

NAPLES, *February 26th, 1897.*

"It is time, in view of appeals that are telegraphed to me from England to declare myself on the Cretan question and to attempt to control events, that I should define my position. It is clear enough. On Oct. 9 I resigned the leadership of the Liberal party, and two days afterwards I bade it more or less formally farewell. I did not make it clear then whether I said farewell to the Liberal Party or to party politics or to public life. It is not necessary now to make that clear ; at any rate for my present purpose.

"But the main point is obvious and remains in force. I resigned the leadership of the Liberal party, not to destroy that party but to promote its union. With the same object I have ever since remained persistently silent and refused all engagements.

"I could not in my judgment within six months of my resignation step forward, and, by taking an independent line, embarrass the Liberal party, which I have always sought to serve, especially by my resignation.

"This view does not necessarily imply my permanent silence or retirement. It is of course difficult to fix an arbitrary limit of time for this and I shall not attempt to do so. But six months under the circumstances would appear a decent minimum.

"Beyond this I am bound to say that I have had a revolting experience of the higher positions in British government, and

that it will take some time to wash out of my mouth the taste of the last administration."

He now replied to Cook as follows :

"MY DEAR COOK,

"I have just received your letter of March 1. Many thanks for it, though I don't agree with it. You lay down two propositions : 1. that I am *de facto* leader of the Liberal party in the matter of foreign affairs : 2. that I am bound to utter a public opinion on the Cretan question. I deny both.

"Last October I laid down the leadership—I retained and reserved nothing. Such a course involves a sacrifice—to some men a great sacrifice. In exchange I obtained absolute liberty of action. No one has any claim now, except that of personal attachment, to press me or ask me to do anything. But, beyond that, who considers me *de facto* leader of the Liberal party in any respect, or who, for that reason or any other, wishes for my opinion on the Cretan or any other question ? We can easily test this. I have been away above seven weeks. Since then I have not received a single communication from any member of the late Government or from any member of the House of Lords. I have had letters from three members of the House of Commons : one from Sir Samuel Montagu forwarding an invitation from Whitechapel, and several from Munro Ferguson and another private member—both very intimate personal friends. Is this the correspondence of a 'Liberal leader' *de facto* or *de jure* ? Does this represent a call from any section of the country for my opinion on any subject whatever ?

"Do not think I am complaining, for my feeling is very different. I am only adducing facts to rebut your propositions. I am giving reasons for not departing from my present attitude of abstention.

"I propose to remain quiet in the country on my return, offering no opinions on any subject whatever. Some few friends like yourself have a right to ask me for my views but I recognise no public claim in any quarter."

The Cretan matter dragged its slow length along, through the summer and on into the following year, but neither on this nor on any other external question did Rosebery say a word in public during 1897.

Ronald Ferguson was untiring in keeping his former chief abreast of events. By this time the split in the ex-Cabinet was openly recognised, and some of its members classed as "Friendlies." There was increasing caution, Ferguson said, among those who could not be so classed, in regard to attacking the Concert. But Harcourt had harassed the Government (March 24th) on Crete when he should have backed their main policy, and conferred with them on South Africa when he should have harassed. Ferguson told Rosebery candidly that in Scotland many people were thinking that either he had gone over, or that he had ceased to care for his old followers. But he loyally explained to inquisitive Members of Parliament Rosebery's objection to speech-making.

Another principal informant in his voluntary exile was Wemyss Reid. At first, Rosebery wrote (January 23rd), he saw the reward of his action in the sequence of events. He was struck by the exact, almost literal agreement between the speeches of the Liberal leaders in the two Houses.

"I always told my colleagues that that would be the precious and almost invaluable result of my withdrawal, and so it is."

The newspapers had not found him out, and he begged his correspondent not to mention that he had written, as he wished to enjoy the blessed peace of oblivion. He watched the intrigues and smallnesses of London as from another planet, and he begged his friend, imbedded in that Cloaca Maxima, not to be disturbed by the petty irritations of that position. For it was only through the annoyance and discomfort of his friends that he was capable of being vexed. He looked forward to a hearty laugh with Reid in Berkeley Square, but begged him till then to write freely.

In a later letter (March 11th) he repeated his refusal to speak on the Cretan imbroglio, with detailed

reasons for keeping in retirement. The party situation was not really harmonised as it seemed to be. "So I will continue to cultivate my cabbages." His loyalty to Mr. Gladstone had evidently been cruelly strained, for he wrote :

"Talking of retirements, Mr. Gladstone's last letter on European war leaves me in doubt whether he considers me a knave or a fool ; but possibly he means both."

And there was in fact an earlier grievance of 1894, for Rosebery had told his confidential correspondent :

"You are correct in saying that no one knew definitely that Mr. Gladstone was going to resign till a day or two before. In spite of remonstrance he deliberately left his successor barely a week to constitute the Government and frame a policy and a Queen's Speech before the Opening of Parliament. This I have always thought was hardly fair play."

Again on May 7th :

"MY DEAR REID,

"A thousand thanks for your kind thought of my birthday.

"I recognise only too plainly that my friends are abused at the present moment. I comfort myself by thinking that they suffer because they are wisely opposing the worst form of Jingoism—all the more dangerous because cloaked by hysteria and the abused phrases of humanity and religion.

"You may think I take all this too seriously. If so, you are mistaken. I am only concerned for my friends, who, instead of swimming with the tide, choose to face obloquy and suspicion on behalf of sound principle. Nevertheless I hope that all my remaining birthdays and theirs will find us ready to do the same.

"Yours sincerely,
"AR."

Rosebery shared with most people mistrust of the Report issued by the South African Committee of Enquiry into the Raid, not the less, perhaps, because of Harcourt's partial responsibility for it.¹

¹ The whole story is told in the *Life of Sir William Harcourt*, vol. ii, ch. xxii, pp. 423-37.

"I am still anxious to learn every development of this discreditable business of the S.A. Committee. Will the indignation die out, or does it spread ?

"I have never read a document at once so shameful and so absurd. One would laugh, did one not cry."

It was the year of the Queen's second Jubilee, and the Colonial Premiers had collected in force to do her honour while conferring on Imperial affairs. There was a great banquet at the Imperial Institute (June 18th), with the Prince of Wales in the chair, and all the leading statesmen round the table. Rosebery had to propose "the Houses of Legislature, Home and Colonial," some thirty in number, as he reminded his hearers.

"I do not for one moment believe," he said, "that under any other form of government than a limited constitutional monarchy could the British Empire have been formed or could have continued to exist. Under either an absolute monarchy or under a republic it must have crumbled away, if it could ever have been formed."

He alluded to the famous speech of Daniel Webster about the British sentry and the British drum in every region of the globe, but there was something better than these "which is co-equal with the British flag, and that is the British sentiment of constitutional freedom." He trusted that the Prime Ministers would not separate without an effort to draw the bonds of Empire closer.

The overseas visitors were also entertained at the National Liberal Club, with Lord Carrington in the chair and Labouchere as vice-chairman. Rosebery and Harcourt headed the long list of public men. Rosebery gave the toast of the Empire. It had been claimed, he remarked, as a prerogative of Lord Beaconsfield, but his Imperialism was merely European and Asiatic, while the newer Imperialism was American, African, and Australian as well. W. E. Forster and Sir John Seeley had higher claims as

pioneers in the movement. He looked forward to seeing a contented Empire of Britains, on the principle by which the Empire had been built up, the bond of Empire in the person of the Sovereign, and local self-government as the basis of it.

The everlasting duel between Protection and Free Trade had almost ceased to excite the leaders of the two parties. A few country Tories still laid wreaths on the grave of the Corn Laws. In the early 'eighties Fair Trade had flickered through its brief day of notoriety. But the policy of the country seemed to be rigidly fixed, so that Rosebery's appearance at the Free Trade Hall at Manchester, when the centenary of the Chamber of Commerce was celebrated, was no resumption of Liberal leadership. One of the Conservative members was on the platform, and Mr. A. J. Balfour had been invited. But in his long address Rosebery chanted the praises of Cobden and Bright, declared that the great military preparations of European countries had led them into fiscal errors, and asserted that although the complaints of farmers were well-founded, they were mainly due to improvements in transport. Anyhow, they were better off than they were before the repeal of the Corn Laws. To-day more interest attaches to the paragraphs on Free Trade and the Empire. Free Trade, he asserted, had produced the wealth that enabled us to sustain the burden of Empire; but also it had averted revolution after 1841, and revolution would have meant the dismemberment of the Empire. But he believed that anything in the direction of an Imperial Commercial League would weaken the Empire internally, and excite the permanent hostility of the whole world. If the free import of the food of the people were checked, it would only succeed in making the Empire odious to the working classes of this country. Again, with all our liabilities, was it not worth while to walk warily in the path of Empire? When, that very year, we had denounced our commercial treaties with Germany and Belgium in the

interests of Canada, a note of alarm was sounded at what we thought simply an ordinary proceeding.

"A scattered Empire like ours, founded on commerce and cemented by commerce, an Empire also well defended so as not to invite wanton aggression, can and will make for nothing but peace. But an Empire spread all over the world, with a uniform barrier of a Customs Union presented everywhere in the face of every traveller, would be, I will not say an Empire of war, but a perpetual menace, a perpetual incentive and invitation to war."

These sentiments were vociferously applauded; and it is certain that to the end of his days Rosebery would have been prepared to repeat the speech without modifying a sentence or an epithet.

He always spoke more gladly in Scotland than elsewhere. Edinburgh, so rich in official libraries and institutional libraries, had at last seen the need for free public libraries. A public-spirited citizen, Thomas Nelson, had bequeathed money for day shelters in poor districts, where humble people could have a chance of finding books and newspapers. Thus branches of the central library were founded, and Rosebery was asked to open one of them (May 10th). He was impressed by the excellent combination of free club with a free library; but it was necessary, he said, to distinguish the two conflicting interests in reading—newspaper and book—the ephemeral and the abiding. A just proportion would obtain the best result from both.

By this time golf had begun to captivate Englishmen as well as Scotsmen, but it had not spread far inland in either country. Edinburgh, of course, teemed with experts. Had Rosebery been thirty years younger, his love of walking, his keen eye, and his firm muscles would surely have made him proficient at the game. But he never attempted to play; and when he opened the new Club House at Barnton, close to Dalmeny, he had to admit his utter ignorance of the art. But he could claim to share that ignorance

with Dr. Boyd,¹ who lived at the Mecca of St. Andrews; and though now presented with a set of clubs, he expressed his dread of making a start in middle life, because when a man was seriously inoculated with a love of golf he was very little use for any other purpose afterwards. Rosebery concluded with a sly allusion to "a distinguished statesman charged with giving too much time to golf, and not enough to the House of Commons."

Since 1891 there had been a choice herd of short-horns at Dalmeny, founded on selections from famous reservoirs of the Cruikshank blood such as Upper-mill, Collynie, and Lord Lovat's at Beaufort. Its owner, rather unaccountably perhaps, never paid much attention to the science of stockbreeding; but this year there was a successful sale and a vast company at luncheon. The host, however, avoided agricultural topics in his speech of thanks. Next came a really great occasion at Stirling, the six-hundredth anniversary of Wallace's victory at Stirling Bridge. Nothing could be more skilful than Rosebery's treatment of a difficult subject, difficult because Wallace's fame is overgrown by legends veiling a very slender column of proved facts. He advanced two propositions—first, that Wallace was the first champion who asserted Scotland as an independent country, for without him Bannockburn might never have been fought; secondly, that he was the type of the man of destiny—the same type whether you call it Cæsar, or Luther, or Washington, or Mirabeau, or Cavour.

He was again at Stirling a month later (October 10th), to receive its freedom. The Provost pleased him by saying that he was thus honoured, though our most cosmopolitan public man, because he was a Scot of the Scots, and the son of their first member after the great Reform of 1832. In Rosebery's reply he ran over the astonishingly picturesque list of

¹ Andrew Kennedy Hutchison Boyd (1825–1899) wrote, under initials A.K.H.B., many books, including *Twenty-five Years of St. Andrews*. Principal of St. Andrews University.

former burgesses, concluding with the member for the Stirling Burghs—"There is none I am prouder to be on the same list with than Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman."

The renewed North Bridge at Edinburgh, the link between the old city and the new, was to have been opened (September 15th) by the Duke and Duchess of York. In their enforced absence Rosebery officiated. At the luncheon that followed he proposed "The City of Edinburgh." Pericles at Athens could not have been more utterly inspired by the genius of his beloved capital.

"The City of Edinburgh, in the words that were used of another city, is 'the joy of the whole earth.' There is nothing like it. Whether we remain in the incomparable street in which we are assembled this afternoon, or whether we cross to those darker recesses which embody three-quarters of the history of Scotland, we are in a city of which there is no like and no parallel, as I believe, in the whole world."

Small wonder that to the Edinburgh burgesses the Rosebery of Downing Street and the Rosebery of Epsom Downs were merged in the Rosebery who was laird of Dalmeny and their fellow-citizen.

He was not less at home in the chair of the Scottish History Society, for Scottish history was one of the veins into which he dug deepest. At the annual meeting (November 23rd) he had much to say of the exiled Stuarts, and lamented the lack of information about the dignities they conferred in their pathetic abdicated past.¹

On the same day Professor Masson, leaving the Professorship of Rhetoric at the University, received the gift of his portrait at Rosebery's hands. This was Rosebery's tribute to the venerable scholar :

"There is more than being a great Professor or a great man of letters—there is something about the character of the man that is more eminent, to my mind, than all his works.

¹ This was later somewhat repaired by the Marquis de Ruvigny in his book *The Jacobite Peerage*.

If you will allow me, I will illustrate it by a figure. Last night in my house by the sea ¹ I was gazing at the waters in front of me, and in the absolutely calm and impressive face of the Firth of Forth there were reflected the stars in the heavens, a blurred and faint reflection it may be, but at any rate a true and sincere portraiture of the eternal lights and lamps of the firmament of the heavens. And I thought that we in the course of human life meet rarely, but now and then, with some human soul that seems to have caught the reflection of the eternal verities, not by striving or by seeking to improve themselves so that they may earn that complexion, but by the simple and pure search for truth they caught that glory, and it is reflected in their lives."

The other Edinburgh occasion of the year was a banquet to Mr. J. B. Balfour,² at the Scottish Liberal Club. The guest, a great lawyer, and a man of fine courtesy, popular on all sides, had been Lord Advocate in Gladstone's and Rosebery's Governments. But he had earlier held the office when Rosebery was grappling with Scottish business at the Home Office, so their personal relations were as close as possible, and led to frequent correspondence. But Rosebery did not touch on party politics when he spoke from the chair. Much of his speech was given to recitals of the glowing tributes paid by others, by

¹ A year or two after his marriage Rosebery was able to realise a cherished dream. He took in hand the restoration of Barnbogle. Poised on the water's edge, buffeted by gales and dashed by heavy seas, it would have been fantastic as the mansion-house of a great estate. But its capabilities as a serious toy were unlimited. The renewal was achieved with singular skill. A vast hall or picture gallery was the main feature, furnished with many bookcases, which overflowed into another large saloon adjoining. There were other smaller dwelling-rooms, but very little bedroom accommodation. Rosebery himself, however, in his widowed days, slept at the castle oftener than not, soothed by the rhythm of the dolorous sea. All his Scottish collections, the harvest of many years, were housed there. There were gathered the thousands of Scottish books, tracts, and pamphlets which, before his death, Rosebery presented to the National Library; there, too, were volumes of literary autographs and historical manuscripts. The castle was a fascinating re-birth, one wisely conceived and skilfully carried out.

² J. B. Balfour (1837-1905). Solicitor-General for Scotland 1880; Lord Advocate 1881, 1886, and 1892-5; Lord of Appeal 1899. *Cr. Baron Kinross* 1902.

Mr. Gladstone and by Mr. Balfour's Conservative successor as Lord Advocate.

Naples the siren had sung her unrecorded song to Rosebery for thirty years, and he had not stopped his ears against it. But it was only now that he fell into her arms. He spent six weeks under the spell from late in January, seeing more of Italian society than in previous years. He had formerly visited not a few possible villas, and this time he came to a decision. Of all those he had seen, the Villa Delahante at Posilipo appealed to him most. As early as 1879 he had written to Sir James Lacaita :

"The Villa Delahante has been the dream of my life, but it does not seem easy to realise. Perhaps you could however ascertain what is the sort of price asked, as I should like to own it even if I could never see it again."

The villa had belonged to the Bourbon Count of Syracuse, the brother of "King Bomba," and had become the property of a French railway contractor, M. Delahante. Beautifully situated in a large sloping garden, with many trees, in a curve of the bay, it included four structures, the principal residence, two close by somewhat smaller, and intended to house guests, and a delicious little pavilion with a couple of rooms, poised over the blue water of a tiny private harbour. After long bargaining, in August he saw M. Delahante at Versailles, "an alert, bright-eyed old man of 81," and in October he became owner of the "Villa Rosebery." It became an intense joy to him, and he was fortunate in having an old Eton friend Rolfe, now Consul at Naples, who was glad to exercise supervision over the new purchase. Only one objection could exist, and this was swallowed up in the fascination of the spot. It was essentially a summer retreat, a villeggiatura to which the Italian flies when, in Landor's words,

"The piper's music fills the street,
The piper's music makes the heat
Hotter by ten degrees."

But it is not always summer in Southern Italy, and lofty ceilings, unheated rooms with tiled or marble floors, are cheerless in the winter months even there. And it is then that the Englishman or Scot in turn tries to escape his own climate, unless he hunts the fox: from May to October business or pleasure are apt to keep him at home.

Other foreign journeys were to Homburg and Gastein. Of the former he wrote to his mother (July 28th):

"It is unusually pleasant, being unusually empty. A black cloud, I fear, hangs over the place, as, I understand, the Prince of Wales is not going there this year, and that to Homburg is as if the mineral springs ceased to flow."

He enjoyed there the company of one of his most valued friends, Philip Wroughton, and walked fifteen miles a day—"the daily round, the common task," as he noted.

Rosebery's warm amity with Herbert Bismarck had been unabated during the past years. In 1892 he had hoped to attend his friend's wedding at Vienna, but it was celebrated on the very day of the dissolution of Parliament. After his arrival at the Foreign Office he wrote:

"So I am once more at the Foreign Office. Your father's absence makes a great change. I do not speak of Germany, for diplomacy is making holiday and I have no special relations with any country just now. But I feel the alteration, though I could not well explain to myself how it shows itself. It is perhaps like shooting at a place where the head game-keeper has been changed. The pheasants are as numerous, the woods are the same, one sees no difference in the beaters; and yet one feels that the scene is different. However, your father will perhaps think this metaphor more suitable to the late Duc de Gramont."

The correspondence went on, interchanging social and political gossip, but with no tinge of backstairs politics. It was often in a light vein:

June 18th, 1893.—"That cursed name of ROSEMBERG haunts me on the Continent; and when people telegraph to

me, as they sometimes do 'Earl Rosebery,' it usually comes out 'Carl Rosemberg.' London is emptying fast, but as for me, I shall never leave it till I leave life or office.

"Future statesmen will have to be all 'blood and iron' to lead this life. Which allusion leads me to send my warm good wishes to your father, and your mother, and if she will accept them, to the Countess."

A daughter was born to the Bismarcks in 1894, and to Rosebery's pleasure was given the name of Hannah. In that year he wrote (March 25th, 1894):

"I only realise that I am no longer Foreign Secretary in the cessation of departmental work. Scarcely any boxes, but an enormous responsibility as to my sayings and doings. One is more watched, one cannot put on one's slippers, one is (or should be) always in uniform—buckled very tight. I have always preferred the Foreign Office and always shall."

At the end of the same year Princess Bismarck died.

38 BERKELEY SQUARE, *December 7th, 1894.*

"MY DEAR HERBERT,

"It was with unbounded grief that I learned the sad news. So noble and simple and sympathetic a nature, so much to her husband and her children. I can hardly realise the home without her.

"I do not write to your father. I write to you as I telegraphed to you, for I am loath to trouble him, and I know that you will convey to him my heartfelt sympathy better than I can myself.

"I fear the blow comes upon you with terrible suddenness and that you were not even in time to witness the end. But I am not sure that it is not best so, and that the haunting recollection of the last moments is not more of a pain than a satisfaction. I remember your mother as she looked at you and at your father—the tenderness and the pride; and that look will always abide with me till the end.

"Ever, my dear Herbert,

"Your affectionate friend in sorrow and in joy,
"AR.

"Perhaps you will find a moment to tell me some details of her illness, and of your father?"

In July 1895 Rosebery wrote on leaving office :

"I accept congratulations with both hands, and rejoice in my freedom, for which I have long been pining."

That freedom enabled him to write more openly on public matters.

March 29th, 1896.—"I am seriously uneasy about Foreign Affairs. Nowhere, except in Russia, can I see any definite policy. I blame nobody in particular, I quite admit that the situation is fluctuating and difficult, but that circumstance rather increases than diminishes my apprehensions. I especially regret that we should plunge into the Soudan at this moment. For we can all see the beginning of a Soudan expedition, but who can foresee the end? Besides it is like firing all your stock of gunpowder at butterflies when you are expecting big game."

The following year Rosebery was still the looker-on. He wrote (June 13th, 1897) :

"Here we are in a tempestuous madness of Jubilee, which everyone wishes to celebrate at everyone else's expense. In the meantime *delirant . . . Achivi*. It is strange how with almost all parliament at your feet how difficult it is to govern in these days. Difficulties used to arrive in old days from excitement,—the present danger is from profound apathy. The ship of the state moves heavily through the oily waters of the Dead Sea."

Not long afterwards Herbert Bismarck came to Homburg to see his friend ; and in October Rosebery paid a long deferred visit to Schönhausen for the christening of the second daughter, going on for a night to Friedrichsrüh. This long friendship was indeed kept in good repair. Rosebery's humour was tickled by one racial characteristic of his comrade. He wrote from Homburg :

"Fond as I am of him, his energy is rather overpowering. He has no idea of the loudness of his voice, and though I lead him into desolate spots, he bellows secrets through the

woods. It is like living with a hurricane. But there is no warmer heart or better friend."

A Teutonic Lawrence Boythorn, he might have added.¹

The Jubilee celebrations opened with an almost private service in St. George's Chapel (June 20th). At its close all the Royal Family made obeisance to the Queen and were embraced by her.

"All were moved, the Queen, the spectators, and the actors in the ceremony,—I never saw anything more profoundly pathetic."

The procession through London two days later was

"perfectly successful and profoundly interesting. The most striking moment was when the crowd spontaneously sang 'God Save the Queen' before the Queen's arrival."

Rosebery's personal contribution to the celebrations is explained in this letter to the Queen :

December 6th, 1897.

"... I think it probable that Your Majesty may have a Jubilee collection of cuttings in which it might find a place. It is a hymn which I wrote for Jubilee Sunday and for Epsom Church.¹ No one knows that I wrote it, and I am well aware that such a theme is quite outside and beyond my poor powers. Nevertheless I am sure that Your Majesty will not disdain it, as expressing the sincere and earnest aspirations of one of Your Majesty's most devoted Subjects."

The famous fancy ball at Devonshire House soon followed, and Rosebery went

"as a gentleman of the 18th century. I was described greatly to my disgust as that effeminate gossip Horace

¹ Monsieur Jules Cambon, formerly French Ambassador at Berlin, tells of his observing to Herr Kiderlen Wächter how tenderly Herbert Bismarck spoke of his father, but how unlike his roughness of manner was to Prince Bülow's pleasant dealing. "Yes," said Kiderlen, "but Herbert Bismarck had one quality that Bülow had not." "What was that?" I asked. "Heart."

² See Appendix II.

Walpole. If challenged for a name I should have given 'The Duke of Devonshire of that time!' But I had no idea of anybody. The best dress was, I thought, Lady Algernon Lennox as Princesse de Lamballe. The Chancellor as George III unspeakable."

Friends of very different types passed with the year. In May Colonel Henry Forester, known to his contemporaries as "the Lad," was mourned by all the world of Melton and Newmarket. He was brother to the two brilliant ladies who cheered Lord Beaconsfield's old age. "A mercy," Rosebery wrote, "as he would have remained blind; so I cannot grieve, but a dear friend and a noble gentleman gone."

As the year was ending:

"Frank Lockwood died of influenza. A terrible blow."

A blow indeed it was to everybody who loved and admired that quick brain, that gifted hand never unkindly employed, that gallant humorous soul.

A humble companion died on the same day as Colonel Forester, who would have liked the joining of the horse's name with his own:

"A bad day. The death of another dear old friend, the horse I loved as some love dogs. . . . I chose a grave for *Raby*. He died standing, like an old hero as he was."

When the Gladstones paid their last visit to Scotland in the autumn of 1897 Rosebery had vainly tried to persuade them to pause at Dalmeny. An interchange of affectionate notes followed. Then came Mr. Gladstone's sojourn abroad, and the wearing physical distress of his last winter and spring. Early in May the end was known to be near. On the 13th Rosebery and John Morley went to Hawarden for a final farewell, and on the 19th that great life ended. On the next day in the House of Lords Lord Salisbury paid perhaps the noblest tribute ever offered to a dead statesman by a living opponent. Rosebery was able

to touch a nearer chord ; and in particular reminded his hearers that—

“ All our thoughts must be turned, now that he has gone, to that solitary and pathetic figure, who for sixty years shared all the sorrows and all the joys of Mr. Gladstone’s life ; who received his every confidence and every aspiration ; who shared his triumphs with him, and cheered him under his defeats ; who by her tender vigilance, I firmly believe, sustained and prolonged his years.”

At midnight on the 27th Rosebery went with Reginald Brett¹ to the vigil over the coffin in Westminster Hall :

“ The vast Hall, the coffin with its kneeling watchers, the silence and solitude, most impressive.”

At the burial next day, when he was one of the pall-bearers, his thoughts were again with the one left behind :

“ A noble sight and ceremony. Mrs. Gladstone a figure of indescribable pathos. Supported by her two sons she knelt at the head of the coffin, and when it was lowered seemed to wish to kiss the ground, saying ‘ once more, only once more ’ (I was close) with a dim idea, I think, that she was to kiss him, but the two sons gently raised her. . . . She was noble to-day, like the Mater Dolorosa in the old pictures,—a figure of sublime unspeakable woe.”

In November Rosebery spoke in Edinburgh when the Scottish form of the Gladstone National Memorial was considered. Men of all parties were there, and he was able to point to the restored Mercat Cross, Mr. Gladstone’s tribute to Edinburgh, as enduring evidence of the statesman’s pride in his Scottish blood and his love for the Scottish capital.

In this narrative much space has been given to Rosebery’s twenty years of close association with the mighty Liberal chief. It pervaded the whole of Rosebery’s brief official career, and it was one of life’s

¹ (1852–1930.) Succeeded as 2nd Viscount Esher 1899. G.C.B., etc.

ironies that the closing of that career should have been due to the last appearance on the political stage of the figure that trod it longest in our whole history.

In a recently published book of Lord Rendel's¹ Rosebery's relations with Gladstone are freely discussed, with frequent signs of the writer's animus against Rosebery as a politician. Lord Rendel was a man of marked ability, and, had his early desire for official life been fulfilled, would have been a prominent figure of the Liberal centre, and a follower of Campbell-Bannerman. As it was, he seems to have taken too seriously Mr. Gladstone's passing allusions to his differences with Rosebery on some foreign questions. And he lost his sense of perspective when he thought² that Gladstone never "regarded except with some scorn Lord Rosebery's boasted nostrum of 'Concert of Europe'"—Mr. Gladstone was quite prepared for isolated action on occasion, as he showed at Alexandria and on the Afghan frontier; but he never underrated the value of European agreement. The unintended effect of Lord Rendel's book, in spite of a meagre allusion to their personal friendship, is a distortion of the real relations between Rosebery and his leader, as I have attempted to describe them. Another curious blunder may also be noted,³ where Lord Granville's supersession in 1886 is ascribed to his speech against the Royal Titles Bill. But Rosebery, who was preferred, also spoke against the Bill.⁴

Lord Rendel's own bias against the Concert of Europe is explained by his judgment of Rosebery's attitude on the Far Eastern Question in 1894. He had long been concerned with China in the business of the Armstrong firm, and in various secret negotiations carried on through the medium of Sir Robert Hart. Therefore, when China's dispute with Japan over Corea threatened war, Lord Rendel's sympathies were solely with the first. In his book (pp. 258-65) he narrates his failure to induce Rosebery to support

¹ *The Personal Papers of Lord Rendel.*

² *Op. cit.*, p. 180.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁴ See p. 99.

China by single action, and Rosebery's use of the "effective but cowardly phrase 'the paramount duty of maintaining the concert of Europe.'"¹ This is not the place to discuss the value of Lord Rendel's arguments for solitary "firm and friendly advice" to Japan, which would hardly have been taken except as veiling a threat. But a few years later, after the defeat of China, and the gathering of vultures round the prey, Rosebery wrote to Wemyss Reid from his retirement :

Confidential.

MENTMORE, December 30th, 1897.

"MY DEAR REID,

"... As to China my main point is this: that my policy was two-fold.

"1. To have Japan on our side.

"2. To reserve strength for this question and possible occasions of a similar kind. (As it is, we are scattered in various wars, which greatly weakens our voice and action.) I would have Great Britain hanging like a thundercloud over these filibusters: not dispersed in showers all over the Empire. I constantly warned the country of this vast impending crisis, of this Greater Eastern question."

Rosebery's encomium of Gladstone was his sole contribution in Parliament during 1898; nor, until a startling occurrence abroad later in the year roused him to speak, did he utter a word on current politics. But he delivered a long address on London Government at St. James's Hall (March 1st). A municipal election was impending, and Rosebery dwelt on two perils of the moment—one, the introduction of party politics into municipal life; the other, the threatened partition of London into a number of municipalities exercising most of the County Council's functions. The transformation of vestries into Borough Councils

¹ Among the corrigenda for insertion in *The Personal Papers of Lord Rendel* appears the following: ch. vi, p. 259—The Concert of Europe. "It may be recorded here that on October 10th, 1880, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Mrs. Gladstone as follows: 'It is the working of the European Concert for purposes of justice, peace and liberty, with efficiency and success, which is the great matter at issue. That has always been the ideal of my life in Foreign Policy.'"

was effected on simple lines in the following year; but at that date the discrepancy between the Moderate vote for the Council and the Unionist vote for Parliament made the Council unpopular among London Conservatives.

There was a distribution of medals to the Fire Brigade in Victoria Park. Rosebery's younger daughter Margaret officiated, making her first public appearance. What Napoleon called "two o'clock in the morning courage," Rosebery said, was the courage that every fireman requires and that, he was proud to think, every London fireman possesses.

He had spoken on municipal politics earlier in the year at Glasgow (June 23rd), after the People's Palace was opened. It was a municipal foundation by that centre of collective enterprise, and Rosebery had no dread of municipal collectivism. On this occasion he went so far as to admit a case of overwhelming strength in favour of a man who chose to be a town councillor rather than a Member of Parliament. For a moment the Imperial stop was kept mute.

And in July he made a rattling defence of the London County Council at the Chairman's dinner, dwelling on its new responsibilities and its glorious future. But it is safe to say that the gathering which he most enjoyed was the Eton dinner to Lord Curzon, Lord Minto, and Bishop Welldon, before their departure to high posts in the distant Empire. Rosebery presided, and his gift of blending humour with real feeling just fitted the occasion. Such farewells must not be jocular, but equally they must not be tearful.

The advance into the Soudan, of which Rosebery had at first thought doubtfully, had culminated with the brilliant engagement of Omdurman, and but a few weeks later it became known that Lord Kitchener, proceeding southwards up the Nile, had encountered Major Marchand and a party from the French Congo at Fashoda, where the French flag had been hoisted. The rights of the territorial question were discussed

with some temper in Paris and London, and Rosebery thought it his duty to speak out for the Government. This was not splitting the party, for Harcourt, little as he favoured the British advance, had no patience with the French pretensions. At the same time, Rosebery's awakening from a two years' slumber might seem a challenge to the leader in the Commons.

But on the peaceful ground of a ploughing match at Epsom, Rosebery, at a dinner which followed, spoke of the policy pursued by the Government at Fashoda as the policy declared by Sir Edward Grey in March 1895, for which he was personally responsible. Sir Edward's speech, it will be recalled, had nearly produced a Cabinet crisis, and its resuscitation at once put a match to the "leadership" bonfire.

And when receiving the Freedom of Perth (October 23rd), he delivered a long address on Foreign Affairs. He spoke feelingly of the rescript issued by the young Emperor Nicholas of Russia. It was a melancholy and humiliating confession that the peace of Europe mainly depended, not on the divine precepts of the Christian religion, but on the awe inspired in every nation by the existence of vast armaments. He went on to speak of the reconquest of the Soudan as a great victory for civilisation. A warm personal compliment to Major Marchand's enterprise was followed by a close examination of the French case, and friendly suggestions to France for a settlement. At the Mansion House banquet to Lord Kitchener he laid most stress on the triumph won by exterminating the menace of Dervish rule, and warding off danger not only from ourselves, but from those neighbours whose gratitude we had a right to claim.

And before the year ended he attended a meeting of City magnates (December 1st), again at the Mansion House, in support of the Gordon Memorial College. The general effect of all this was to restore him as an active force in public life. The Liberals of the Centre were not likely to ignore this, and when, early in December, Sir William Harcourt solemnly resigned

his leadership, and when, at the beginning of the next year, John Morley also retired, their retreat seemed to Rosebery's eager followers to bring him nearer the footlights. For a party whose three most eminent members had all said good-bye—without quite going—was an anomaly that could not persist. Thoughtful people extended warm sympathy to Campbell-Bannerman in his succession to the leadership of his party in the House of Commons.

In most respects this year 1898 was the most uneventful that Rosebery had yet spent. He paid short visits to Naples, first in January, and again at Whitsuntide, when he slept for the first time at the villa. He had some delightful outings in the Rendels' yacht, and dined with them among the fireflies. In July he was at Vienna, and greatly interested in an hour's talk with Baron Kallay.¹ Rosebery, and his friend the ever agreeable Ralph Milbanke, so long Councillor at Vienna, dined at a small restaurant in the Exhibition :

“ At one table Thun the Prime Minister, at another Franz Ferdinand the Heir Apparent. Neither, I think, destined to save Austria.”

After a long fortnight at Gastein he was at Vienna again for a day, meeting Count Goluchowski :

“ A pleasant Gallicised Pole, giving one the idea of a good diplomatist without much power ; short, without dignity, but agreeable, unaffected, and unassuming.”

His other foreign expedition was to Amsterdam, on Ferdinand Rothschild's yacht, with the two boys, for the fine celebrations of the young Queen's assumption of the throne. The Rembrandt Exhibition was a feature of the year, and except for the “ Night-Watch,” Rosebery thought that the best pictures came from England. Most of the autumn was spent in Scotland, including a visit to Mar Lodge, where

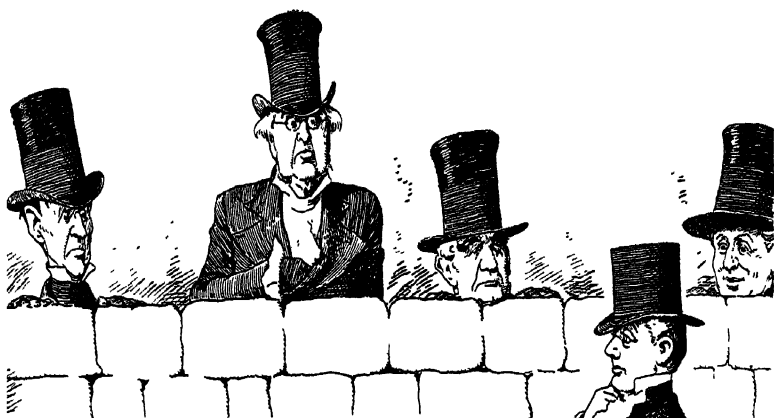
¹ The well-known Hungarian statesman and administrator.

Rosebery again did fairly "on the hill." The Empress Frederick spent some days at Dalmeny, and gave her host "one of the little rings that Frederick the Great gave to his friends, with a little portrait of himself. A charming gift."

The short list of contemporary close friends grew shorter at the end of the year. In September Christopher Sykes had a seizure, and after lingering on for three months he died. He had always been a favourite comrade of Rosebery's, especially in Paris, where there was unusual leisure for strolling and quiet talk of old days. "He was 'never in the way, and never out of the way,' as Charles II said of Godolphin," was Rosebery's epitaph for him. Two days later a still heavier blow fell. As Rosebery arrived at Mentmore from a very pleasant week's shooting with Lord Derby, he was handed two telegrams, "one from Ferdy, saying he was rheumatic and could not come to Mentmore to-day—the other from his butler saying he was dead."

Ferdinand Rothschild's attachment to Rosebery, and its full return, have already been noted. The fun of his frequent letters; his extraordinary judgment of works of art; his cosmopolitan knowledge combined with a complete adaptability to English life; a certain sensitiveness not unlike Rosebery's own; the memory of his warm friendship for his cousin Hannah—all these sharpened the pang of his loss.

After the refusals of Sir William Harcourt and John Morley to take an "active and responsible part in the formal counsels of the heads of the Liberal Party," Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was elected leader in the House of Commons. Rosebery cordially approved; and the new chief made a popular start on the green benches. But neither of his colleagues had actually retired from politics. Morley was beginning to be immersed in the *Life of Gladstone*, but he opposed the Government on the Soudan Question in February and found himself in the



THE RETURN
OF
"THE LITTLE MINISTER."

Will the Elders reinstate him?

"PUNCH"

June 18th 1898.



By kind permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

John
Morley.

Sir William
Harcourt.

Sir Henry
Fowler.

Lord
Rosebery.

H. H.
Asquith.

opposite lobby to Sir E. Grey and other Liberals. Harcourt made a successful reappearance on finance, and he too prided himself on being in direct opposition to Rosebery's followers. Rosebery himself had no more reason to maintain silence than other retired leaders, but as usual he did not entirely appreciate the colour that the public would place on his apparent resumption of activity. The City Liberal Club dined on May 5th, and Rosebery presided. He opened with a threnody over recent losses: William Rogers—"If I had to seek anywhere for an embodiment of what I think true Liberalism in mind and spirit is, I should think of Mr. Rogers"; Lord Herschell—"I have come to the deliberate conviction that he was the first public servant of his country at the time when he died"; and Thomas Ellis, a loss like that of Francis Horner or Charles Buller—"There was something in the lofty purity of that spirit which impressed everybody with whom he came into contact, every party, every class, every section of the community." He congratulated Campbell-Bannerman on the cordial spirit he had spread in the ranks, and then made tolerably direct appeal to the Liberal Unionists, and gave "advice to politicians" to constitute a new party to embody all the elements which existed in the Liberal party before 1886. He asked for combination of the old Liberal spirit with the new Imperial spirit, and for the larger patriotism which, when large issues are presented, makes all parties sink their differences.

His friends had no idea of leaving him alone. On July 26th Herbert Gladstone came to the Durdans for the night, and joined in the after-dinner drive.

"The same old story as with E. Grey and Fowler. I point out in reply:

"1. That I definitely resigned in 1896.

"2. That my resignation was sincere, solemn and not strategical.

"3. That nothing but some unsuspected crisis could bring me back.

"4. That if I came back now I should not bring peace, but a sword. Old and dominant rivalries and enmities would revive.

"5. Whereas now all is for the best in the best possible of worlds,—bye-elections going well, party united, etc."

Meanwhile, the South African trouble, the history of which is not part of this biography, was becoming more menacing. Tempers were hardening on both sides, and the protagonists, Chamberlain and Milner and Kruger, utterly different as they were, were no experts in the art of conciliatory firmness. The only inevitable wars are wars for which people prepare, and this was one of them. Rosebery's part in the drama will be set forth later. Again in this year he was silent in the House of Lords. That House, however, took a rather comical share in a matter of direct concern to Rosebery. In the last days of his Government of 1895 a statue of Oliver Cromwell was officially promised. There were loud protests in the House of Commons, especially from Irish members mindful of Drogheda, and to avoid unseemly controversy a private person offered to bear the cost of the statue. It was an open secret that this person was Rosebery himself. Then came a battle over the site, the acceptance of the statue having been confirmed by the Conservative Government. One act of the comedy was played in the House of Lords, where a protest against the erection of the statue without the sanction of Parliament was carried by six Peers against four members of the Government. The statue was unveiled without ceremony on November 14th, and a crowd filled the Queen's Hall in the evening when Rosebery was surrounded by a band of Liberal Peers and Members of Parliament. Rosebery noted the curious paradox that Bernini's bust of Cromwell had been accepted by the present Government and placed in the very heart of the House of Commons. He went on to explain, not to defend, Cromwell's Irish policy and the King's execution. He sketched the tributes paid by many critics, some

of them no sympathisers with the Protector's policy : Cromwell was a great soldier, a great ruler, and a great maintainer of British power and influence abroad. Rosebery dwelt lovingly on this last Imperial aspect of the hero. Then he passed to Cromwell's spiritual side, to the unfair charge of hypocrisy, and in conclusion to the present need of a Cromwell, who would not be the same in externals, but—

“ He would be strenuous, he would be sincere. He would not compromise with principles. His faith would be in God and in freedom, and in the influence of Great Britain as promoting, as asserting both.”

This was one of Rosebery's best addresses, on a level of uniform eloquence. His temporary abstention from party warfare seemed during the last year or two to give colour to his social or literary speeches, probably because he was less physically tired. And he began to be thought of as a public orator, able to speak for the nation because no longer a party chief. But it will appear later how strictly this conception of him was limited.

The Conservative Government, with one of those impulses that dignify British public life, had nominated J. B. Balfour, a Liberal ex-Minister, to the highest judicial post in Scotland, that of Lord President of the Court of Session. His farewell to politics was honoured at the Scottish Liberal Club (November 27th) ; and Rosebery as Chairman remarked that he would have liked, in spite of missiles that might have been thrown at him, to propose the toast of Her Majesty's Government in gratitude for their generous and wise act. He referred to the dinner of three years before, and to the universal goodwill shown to a man who, in a career of nine-and-thirty years, had never bartered or in any way compromised his opinions. No appointment of his own, Rosebery said, had ever given him the pleasure that this did.

Before this (May 17th), the Northbrook Society had entertained Lord Elgin in London, and it fell to

Rosebery to propose the returned Viceroy's health. He was able to praise with justice Elgin's patient calmness in confronting the difficulties of war, plague, and famine. He described the frontier as a cactus hedge.

"Absolutely impervious to those who wish to enter it, but eminently undesirable if you wish to make it a seat to occupy."

He had also presided at the annual dinner of the Civil Service (October 26th), and at an excursion of Caledonian Railway servants to Carlisle. He received the Freedom of Bath, where he unveiled tablets to the memory of Chatham and William Pitt, and sketched their history with his usual diligent accuracy. Chatham's connection with Bath was the closer, and Rosebery devoted to him the bulk of his speech. He concluded his eulogism with :

"I regard Mr. Pitt as the first Liberal Imperialist. . . . I venture to think,—I may be wrong,—in ten years perhaps you will remember my prophecy,—I believe the party of Liberal Imperialism is destined to control the destinies of this country."

A pleasant incident of this visit was a stay at Wells with Bishop Kennion, the appointment of Rosebery's short premiership.

The following letter has its human interest :

To Dr. Randall Davidson.

[Copy.] 38 BERKELEY SQUARE, May 9th, 1900.

"MY DEAR BISHOP,

"I am only just recovering from the stupefaction produced by yesterday's proceedings, but I must write you a line to wish you joy of your move and your speech.¹ I only

¹ On May 8th, 1900, the Bishop of Winchester made a long speech urging the desirability of legislative effect being given to such of the recommendations of the final Report of the Royal Commission on Liquor Licensing Laws as were common both to the "Majority" and the "Minority" Reports.

heard the last half of the speech, as I had to go and see my boy's tutor at Eton, but I thought it excellent. The only criticism I would offer is one of manner—it was a little breathless and hurried: a pause or two would have been an improvement. Archbishop Tait you will remember was quite at the other extreme. Speaking in the House of Lords, where every auditor gives the impression of profound weariness and boredom, one is apt to hurry in order to release a suffering audience. I know you will forgive my presumption.

“I was diverted at hearing a prime minister speak of a motion brought forward by a Bishop and amended by a Primate as a ‘fraud and a wile.’

“Y. sincy,
“AR.”

Rosebery had hired the Duke of Sutherland's yacht *Catania* and spent a few days at Naples and more at Messina. He went on to Greece, and to Constantinople, where a curious dilemma confronted him. The Sultan, the infamous Abdul Hamid, had got wind of his arrival; carriages and aides-de-camp met the yacht. Rosebery told the Ambassador, Sir N. O'Connor, that he could accept no favours from the Sultan, and would not see him. The Ambassador was dismayed; but finally a message was sent that Rosebery begged to be allowed to remain a private tourist. A series of elaborate *pourparlers* ensued. Turkish Ministers, who could not dine out without the Sultan's leave, were forbidden to meet Rosebery unless he agreed to come to the palace; one of them, who managed to see him, pleaded that this insult would drive the Sultan into the arms of Russia. It was a painful interview, but Rosebery, asserting that he was a private individual, remained obdurate, and, merely sending a message that he was *vivement froissé* that Ministers had been refused permission to meet him at dinner, steamed out of the harbour.

Rosebery's sons were finishing their delightful Eton existence, and his younger daughter's marriage in April made the first break in the family circle.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

When President Kruger's insolent ultimatum of October 1899 made war certain, Rosebery felt himself absolved from his rule of silence. At the Pitt celebrations at Bath (October 26th, 1899) he maintained that it was no moment for criticism; time for that when the war should be over. He examined at length the incident of Majuba Hill and the "sublime experiment" of Mr. Gladstone in making peace. It was an attempt to carry into international policy the principles of the Gospel itself; but it was also due to Mr. Gladstone's conviction, only realised by his intimates, that the overpowering might of England permitted action which weaker countries could not take. But the terms had been regarded as proof of weakness, and, were their author here, he would not contemplate the grant of such terms again. They might think this a small war, but no wars are small.

A day or two later, at Edinburgh, he bade farewell to the Scots Greys and the Gordon Highlanders, and again spoke of an inquisition after the war, but urged present support to those who had the direction of affairs.

At Chatham (January 23rd, 1900), when the eyes of the country had been partly opened to the magnitude of its task, he dwelt on its most formidable character. This was not merely because of the recent reverses, but because we had lost the sympathy of Europe and also much of our prestige. But that would be recovered, secured by our Navy and our possession of capital. But we must employ the scientific methods which we had rejected. In the House of Lords (January 30th and February 15th) he repeated his hope that investigation would be deferred; but in the debate on the Army proposals of the Government he declared that the Government had never been in time. Lincoln's first demand in the Civil War was for 5,000 men, and by the time the war was over the United States had put two-and-

three-quarter millions in the field. The Government had no notion how the feeling of constant danger was present to the minds of the people.

Rosebery's view of the situation was simple, and certainly was that of many thoughtful people in Britain. One minority considered the war a sheer iniquity, an orgy of greed and violence. Another, at the opposite pole, thought nothing too bad for the Boers, a tribe of psalm-singing hypocrites who deserved to lose the gold mines they were too stupid to exploit. A third held that Chamberlain and Milner had displayed all possible skill and patience in negotiating with such an impossible opponent as President Kruger, and that the war was inevitable. Rosebery had, of course, thought the raid a senseless blunder, but he both liked and admired Cecil Rhodes, who was often his guest. He was not disposed to think hardly of such a Napoleonic Imperialist. And he resented the hue-and-cry let loose against Dr. Jameson, whose personal qualities made it difficult not to turn a half-blind eye to his solitary lapse. Years afterwards when "the Doctor" died, Rosebery wrote to his brother :

"I have known few people if any so irresistibly attractive of affection as your brother. It was I think his eyes—the eyes of an affectionate dog I used to call them and there can scarcely be higher praise—that first impressed one, combined with the good-natured humour of the mouth. These lured one past the externals to know the man, and when one knew the man one realised at once the noble and generous character which has fascinated so many thousands. I was most impressed by him when I went to see him in prison and found him the same cheerful unchanged unsubdued 'doctor.' One would have trusted him readily with one's life or anything else—one could 'draw at sight' upon his face."

Rosebery was not specially bound to any of the principals in the Government camp. He had always been friendly with Chamberlain but nothing more ; and though he appreciated, as everybody must, the distinction of Milner's intellect and character, he was

in no way under the Balliol spell in the manner of two or three of the Liberal Imperialists. He thought that negotiations with the Transvaal Government had been sadly mismanaged, and that in a sense Milner was greatly responsible for the war. But, as has been noted, he wished to defer all criticism until victory was complete. A stricter partisan, as he recognised, would regret that roughness or clumsiness in negotiating, insensibility to the opponent's case, even neglect of military preparation, would all be forgotten when the day was won. But it would be a greater misfortune to hamper victory by untimely criticism. The only hope of discouraging future carelessness or mismanagement lay in drastic inquiry when peace was attained. From the first it was the cue of the Unionists to denounce all Liberals as enemies of their country. Even the Imperialist wing could not escape. Some of these, curiously enough, believed that annexation of the two Dutch republics would not be necessary; while most Liberals of the Centre, such as Campbell-Bannerman, and even some of the Left, like John Morley, saw from the first that it was inevitable. Rosebery himself had no doubts on this point.

The strange publication of the recriminatory Spion Kop dispatches in April was hotly debated in both Houses. Rosebery bitterly assailed the Government for washing dirty linen in the presence of the world.

"Mr. Gladstone once said to me of a statesman now dead, and whom I shall not name, that he was of a composition to which water would add strength. I am afraid that history will write that epitaph on His Majesty's Government."

The war progressed without repetition of the earlier reverses, and the spectacular occupation of the Boer capitals created the illusion that it was drawing to its close. There was a discussion in the House of Lords (July 28th) on the military strength of England in relation to the continent of Europe. The refusal to sanction the Commander-in-Chief's participation in debate was blamed by Rosebery; and a few days

afterwards he put down a motion on which the question could be discussed. On the first occasion Lord Lansdowne had flouted the idea, on the obvious ground that the officer would become a political partisan, and was stung to sharp reprimand of his old friend's methods of criticism. In his second speech Rosebery carefully abstained from personalities, and made a good point by the reminder that five years ago the then Opposition had declined to take the Secretary of State for War as the mouthpiece of his experts, but had turned the Government out. There was no division, but the sense of the House was rather with Lansdowne on this single question, though the War Office was not winning many laurels just then.

Parliament was dissolved in the middle of September. The "Khaki Election" was an undisguised party manoeuvre, and it met with all success. The Government, which had lost rather more than the customary number of by-elections, found itself a shade stronger than at the dissolution.

When the Address was moved in the House of Lords, "the close of the war in South Africa" was the theme of the Government representatives. Lord Kimberley disposed of that pretension, and when Rosebery's turn came he devoted himself to a fierce denunciation of "this wanton election" for which no cause or reason would ever be given. Above all, he resented the cry that every Liberal vote was a vote "sold" or "given" to the Boers. What an encouragement to them that some forty-five per cent. of the voters had taken their side. There was Mr. Charles Rose¹ at Newmarket, who had lost two sons in the war in which the third was fighting. Placards were put up all over the constituency representing him as helping Mr. Kruger to haul down the British flag, with remarks too scurrilous to mention. "That was a tragic Imperialist indeed! There is a Nemesis attending methods of that kind." He also spoke caustically of

¹ (1847-1913.) M.P. 1903-18. Cr. Baronet 1909.

the reconstruction of the Government, and of the festive circle of its members that could assemble at Hatfield at Christmas. The Duke of Devonshire ignored the main indictments in the speech, and did little but remark that when Rosebery had reconstructed the Opposition he could judge better of the reconstruction of the Government.

This was a fair taunt enough, though it was no answer to Rosebery's charges. The fact remained, and remains, that the election of 1900, and the methods whereby it was won, mark the least creditable chapter in sixty years of British political history. Rosebery wrote to a friend in October: "I never remember dirtier work done than at this election."

But the Opposition was shattered into at least three fragments, roughly represented by Rosebery, Campbell-Bannerman, and Harcourt.

The Liberal Imperial Council was formed in 1901, with Lord Brassey as Chairman and Mr. Robert Perks¹ as one of its Vice-Chairmen. It was composed of Rosebery's followers, but he did not belong to it himself. He wrote to Perks (June 29th, 1901):

"The less your new party is tainted with Roseberyism the better. My conviction is that I had better remain as I am and take no part. Later on as an independent co-adjutor I may or may not be of use."

Since Rosebery's resignation Mr. Perks had been one of his frequent correspondents, and was becoming one of his most trusted lieutenants. The blend of sturdy Nonconformity with generous Imperial sentiment appealed directly to Rosebery's heart. To his head also, because he found an ally against that large Nonconformist section to which the war meant simply unjust aggression from first to last.

The war had taken a guerilla aspect. There was no attempt to treat the Boers as *francs-tireurs* outside the conventions of warfare, but it was considered neces-

¹ b. 1849. Civil Engineer; M.P. 1892-1910; President of Wesleyan Conference. Cr. Baronet 1908.

sary to combat them by methods equally irregular according to the European standard of the day. These included the punitive burning of farms, and the massing of women and children in concentration camps. The heart-searchings of the Liberal party became deeper. On June 14th, 1901, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman made his famous speech at a dinner given by the National Reform Union: "When was a war not a war? When it was carried on by methods of barbarism in South Africa." This phrase was of course seized on as an attack on the humanity of our soldiers, whom the speaker should have expressly exonerated before he used it, instead of doing so later in the House of Commons. One hundred and fourteen members of the City Liberal Club asked Rosebery to address them, but he preferred to begin by a written reply, which appeared in *The Times*. In this he reiterated his determination not to return to party politics. His line of conduct was simple, obvious, and loyal, so it had been called mysterious. There was a great Liberal force in the country, but it must make up its mind about the war. Neutrality and an open mind made up an impossible attitude. The war was either just or unjust, the methods either uncivilised or legitimate. But this was not a transient difference of opinion. It was based on a sincere fundamental and incurable antagonism of principle with regard to the Empire at large and our consequent policy. One school or the other must prevail if the Liberal party was once more to become a force. A party cannot be conducted on the principle of Issachar.

The letter was followed by a speech to the Club which developed and extended it. He spoke amiably of the trying situation of his "old friend Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman," but ironically of the speeches at the National Reform Union. He thought that no Government had ever crowded such a frightful assembly of errors, of weaknesses, and of wholesale blunders into its history as had this Government.

Two later sentences stuck in the memories of hearers and readers: "You start with a clean slate as regards those cumbersome programmes with which you were overloaded in the past," and "I must plough my furrow alone. That is my fate, agreeable or the reverse: but before I get to the end of that furrow it is possible that I may find myself not alone."

There had been a party meeting at the Reform Club a week before, at which Campbell-Bannerman had lamented "personal antagonisms," and had received a vote of confidence from all sections. It was clear that Rosebery's closest allies thought his declaration of the fundamental cleavage in the Liberal party somewhat untimely.

The whole tale of the dissensions that racked the Liberal party, with the rival banquets known as "war to the knife and fork," is admirably told in Mr. Spender's *Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, who was the unhappy central figure in the controversy. Rosebery was not allowed to remain out of the fray, but he was no willing participant. Perhaps he erred in associating, as he did, criticism of the Government's war policy with indifference to the future of the Empire, and in not distinguishing publicly between those Liberals who thought the war and its conduct a blunder and those who thought them a heartless crime. But he felt compelled to stand by the Imperialist creed in its entirety, and on the platform it is impossible to refine indefinitely. He could not feel sure which way duty pointed. To Perks, who wrote to him at Gastein of the need of a leader, he replied (July 25th):

"You are, as I always tell you, fighting for a cause, not for a man. I, having retired, am neither in a position to come forward nor to speak on behalf of the Liberal party, though this does not imply that I may not be of use."

Consequently, as the year was closing, and peace with Dutch South Africa still seemed distant, he

accepted an invitation to speak at Chesterfield. The occasion was announced some time beforehand, to the annoyance of the anti-war leaders. In some respects Rosebery's task was delicate. Some of his closest friends, he thought, had gone too far in their canonisation of Milner, and their blunt determination to pursue the war to a finish at any cost. He spoke for two hours, and more than half of the speech was devoted to the war, its preliminaries, and the hopes for its conclusion. He began by blaming the Government for their heavy-handed diplomacy and their blindness over the Boer armaments. The General Election of 1900, he said, had struck deeper at the roots of political morality than anything within his political recollection. He derided Lord Halsbury's phrase of "a sort of warfare" in South Africa. He defended, on the whole, the methods of concentration camps and of martial law. He then came to peace policy. He protested to the utmost of his power against Milner's declared intentions of avoiding any settlement with the enemy. He begged the Government to recall the resistance of the United Netherlands against Spain, and the history of Lord North's administration. Rosebery proceeded to offer two suggestions to the Government. The first, of which nothing came directly, was a picturesque sketch of a fortuitous meeting between a British representative and a representative of the exiled Dutch Government. The second, of which the wisdom was proved by the event, was the negotiation of peace by Lord Kitchener, not by the present High Commissioner or by one specially sent out. There had been a fierce clamour from the Left for Milner's recall, and to this Rosebery would not assent. He was for as full an amnesty as possible, for lavish generosity in re-stocking farms and appeasing the remains of civil rancour. We were bound, he said, to the Boers—

"for better or worse, in a permanent, inevitable and fateful marriage. . . . I want to bind, to heal, not to keep open the mortal wound which is being caused by this war."

After summarising his policy, he continued, "what I can do to further it I will do." Those on the platform sprang to their feet and waved their hats, for it sounded like a resumption of leadership. He went on to remind them that his policy did not run on party lines, but he appealed not to the party but to the country.

Rosebery developed his theme of pacification at Liverpool early in the following year (February 14th). His allusion to a fortuitous meeting of negotiators had been ridiculed by people ignorant of history.¹

A Dutch Minister had now come over unofficially, and there was a possibility of conversations with Boer delegates. Rosebery never felt certain, he observed, that a wise statesman could not have concluded peace with General Botha in March of last year.

When, in the early summer of 1902, the peace of Vereeniging was concluded by Lord Kitchener with General Botha, the settlement followed in broad outline the conditions for which Rosebery had contended.

The sensation caused by the Chesterfield speech was not only due to the South African pronouncement. The opening passages asserted the doctrine of "the clean slate" and urged that the "fly-blown phylacteries of the Liberal Party" should be put aside.² The general effect, however, was to induce Campbell-Bannerman to open negotiations, and he went to luncheon in Berkeley Square. His impressions of the conversation and of Rosebery's attitude are set out in his *Life*,³ Rosebery's in a memorandum jotted down at the time :

¹ The instances he had in mind were the conclusion of the Tripartite Treaty by the Abbé Dubois under Louis XV and Mr. Oswald's secret negotiations in Paris in 1783 for peace with our insurgent colonies.

² Campbell-Bannerman, we are told, objected to this metaphor on zoological grounds. No rational fly would lay its eggs on a phylactery.

³ Vol. ii, pp. 16-18.



Henry Thompson. Sat. July 12 1885.

By kind permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

THE "DEUS IN MACHINA."

Lord R-s-b-ry : "H'm, I see you are in difficulties, madam. For myself, I shall not voluntarily re-enter the water ; but I will give you a few elementary hints on the natatory art !"

LONDON, *December 23rd*, 1901.

"Yesterday when I was at the Chapel Royal C.-Bannerman called on me leaving a card followed up by a note, expressing a wish to see me. So I asked him to luncheon to-day. He struck me as much changed (I had not seen him for many months). He had lost his tranquil and portly ease, seemed aged and shrunk and irritable (for him). He began talking about substantial agreement &c. and I somehow fell at once into Irish Home Rule and stated definitely that I could have nothing further to do with Mr. Gladstone's policy, that much had happened since 1892 including the Irish Local Government Bill and my own experience at the F.O. What I had then seen of the working of the Austro-Hungarian and Swedish-Norwegian systems had made me feel that I could never be a party to introducing anything of the kind in Great Britain.

"This rather disconcerted C.-B., as he had just declared himself at Dunfermline in favour of Irish Home Rule. He tried to soften down my declaration, but I was emphatic.

"As to the war, we dwelt chiefly on 'methods of barbarism.' He declared that the effect of this fatal phrase on foreign opinion had been recently manufactured by *The Times*. I instanced as *per contra* its effect on me when I was alone at Gastein. I took occasion to speak my regret at the Holborn restaurant dinner, the speech which he then made, and the company amid which he had deliberately placed himself. To this he said nothing and offered no explanation. He gave me the impression of not being very proud of it. He spoke however with complacency of his recent tour in Devonshire and Lancashire, and with great bitterness (quite unlike him) of the 'rebellion' attempted in Scotland which had been 'put down and squashed out by our fellows.' He named Haldane and Munro Ferguson with peculiar asperity.

"I inferred that union between his section and Asquith's was more remote than ever. (More especially as the same evening Haldane proposed himself at Mentmore and spoke with an acrimony which could scarcely be exceeded of C.-B.)

"C.-B. ended by acknowledging, in reply to my remark in justification of Asquith that he (C.-B.) had definitely thrown himself into the arms of the Pro-Boer section, that his private opinions had always been with that section. (This I had never doubted.)

"He told me that he had seen Harcourt and Morley since

the Chesterfield speech. The first had been somewhat obstreperous, but had been cooled down.

"In the midst of the conversation he said that he must catch his train and hurried off."

There was a good deal of essential agreement between the two men, but neither could co-operate with the extreme followers of the other. Rosebery's Liverpool speeches, and his expressed conviction that a Parliament in Ireland could not be thought of for the time being, gave body to the metaphor of the clean slate. To say that the Newcastle programme was indigestible fare was one thing; to abandon Gladstone's Home Rule was another. Accordingly Campbell-Bannerman at Leicester asked what the Irish policy of the party was to be. Was it coercion? Rosebery promptly wrote to *The Times* that his friend's declarations, both on domestic policy and on the war, had brought about "a moment of definite separation," with a compliment to Sir Henry's devotion to "what he conceives to be the interests" of the Liberal party. Soon afterwards Asquith made a speech on Ireland, asserting that the Irish problem was neither settled nor shelved, but that British opinion must be won by "step by step" methods. Most English Liberals did not greatly differ from him in this matter. Only a few stalwarts would have engaged to make an Irish Bill on Gladstonian lines the first measure following a Liberal victory. But the immediate consequence of the public dissension was the foundation of the Liberal League. After a gathering of Liberal Imperialists in Berkeley Square the new birth was announced, and its meaning and purpose were set out at a vast meeting in Glasgow on March 10th.

Rosebery had always kept in touch with the organisers at the Liberal headquarters, especially with Charles Geake, active, genial, and clear-headed. He represented the outlook of the *Westminster Gazette*; so for the new organisation it was necessary to look

elsewhere. A principal agent was therefore found in W. Allard, the extremely skilful secretary of the Home Counties Liberal Federation. No more loyal or efficient agent could have been chosen. From 1902 to 1910 many letters passed between him and Rosebery. From the start the leader announced a severe limitation of his own speeches. He was perpetually spurred to make more speeches, even after the Government of 1905 had abstracted some of the lights of the League.

Rosebery sketched the history of the political severance, disclaiming any personal division between himself and one of the oldest of his political friends. He compared the new League with the Liberation Society, whose course was still unaccomplished. The League was not to be shut out from the party, unlike Liberal Unionist leaders, who were undistinguishable from Conservatives. After repudiating the prospect of an independent Irish Parliament, and explaining the doctrine of the clean slate as the abandonment of the Newcastle programme, he named education, with praise of Haldane's activity on the subject; temperance, on which he urged them to take what they could get, proceeding in the van of popular sentiment; and above all efficiency, "a condition of national fitness equal to the demands of our Empire." The seven years of Conservative Government had been "seven years lost for all social and human causes; seven years lost for all measures which make for national health and national efficiency; seven years lost in our training and preparation for the keen race of nations, both in commerce and in dominion." He begged them to remember that at Chesterfield he spoke not to a party or a party machine, but to the nation.

The Centre of a political party and its chiefs, who always more or less speak for the Centre, resent the formation of special organisations within its ranks. Men of like minds are bound to group themselves morally, but they must not do more. Hence ortho-

dox Liberals of the Centre were irritated by the League. The Radicals of the Left, of course, regarded it with loathing. This is not the place to write the history of the Liberal League, which was less Rosebery's creation than the creation of others to maintain him in active leadership. It was not destined, as some of its promoters hoped, and as Rosebery thought possible, to become an Aaron's rod swallowing up the other sticks in the Liberal bundle. But it served a real purpose at the time, putting heart into many of the best men in the party, and probably preventing some of them from quitting political life in disgust. And it was able to do this because it was a genuine Liberal organisation, in no way anxious to end as the Left wing of the Tory party, as the subsequent history of its field-officers shows. Nearly all of them became Liberal Ministers, and one concluded his career on the Woolsack in a Socialist Government. Rosebery, at any rate, was determined that the League should not be thought a mere appanage of himself. Some months later he wrote to Perks :

"I wish very much that it [a Glasgow paper] would cease to make adherence to me personally a condition of its support. I am sure that that does harm, and when I heard that they were making it a test, I begged them not to use my name in any way. If the League becomes a matter of a person instead of a principle, I shall leave it. But of this I hope there is no fear."

"How does fortune banter us!" In 1903 she bantered the Liberal party into an appearance of complete reunion in resistance to Joseph Chamberlain's fiscal raid. It was not all banter, because the common experiences of 1903 insensibly helped the fusion of 1905. Rosebery was a convinced Free Trader, and his dread of any attempt to frame an Imperial Zollverein has already been noted.¹ He repeated his fears in a speech at Leeds in May 1902,

¹ See pp. 314, 541.

and at Burnley in May 1903. Campbell-Bannerman welcomed the co-operation offered in Rosebery's speech at Leicester (November 17th, 1903) :

"In this very place, and from this very platform, an attempt was made to proscribe my policy and my friends. Why do I recall that now ? Is it for purposes of recrimination ? God forbid. Let bygones be bygones. I fling back the message of peace. I say this—that Liberals will be fools, and worse than fools, if they be not united, shoulder to shoulder, to resist this mad and dangerous experiment, if they do not stand close and cordial together to maintain the noble fabric of our commerce and our Empire."

But the limitations which seemed so simple to Rosebery, and to some others so puzzling, were still operative. He had set them down in a memorandum not long before :

August, 1903.

"1. In 1896 for reasons good or bad but which I thought and think more than sufficient, I severed all political connections and retired from public life for ever.

"2. In 1901 very reluctantly I returned for a time, lured by the hope of effecting something towards peace, and incidentally as it were laid down, what I believe to be the only sound policy for the Liberal Party.

"3. Not long afterwards my policy was publicly repudiated and condemned by one of the joint official leaders of the Liberal Party.

"4. In order to prevent the total proscription of that policy, of which there had been previous symptoms, I assisted in forming the Liberal League, which thus became and remains my only formal connection with public life. It is a protective and defensive body.

"5. Such then is my position succinctly stated. But I may have soon to face the not remote contingency of being asked to join a Liberal Government.

"6. My answer is unhesitatingly, No.

"Personally my wish to have done with the contentions of public life has never wavered since 1896, on the contrary it has strengthened.

"Politically it would not be possible to join a hierarchy of which the only positive or distinctive note has been proscrip-

tion of my policy and a reiterated attachment to the policy of Gladstone's Home Rule.

"Moreover, for those who regard office as a crown and a reward, it is clear that it should fall to those who have borne the burden and heat of the political day since 1895.

"My associates in the Liberal League do not comprise more than a score of members of the House of Commons. That does not impose on me any obligation or responsibility with regard to administration. Quite the contrary. Several too of these associates more easily satisfied and more in the bondage of politics than I, will no doubt join such a Government and influence it soundly.

"7. There are other obvious considerations. It is the great majority of the party which should frame the policy and form the Government. With that majority I have no connection.

"AR."

Rosebery's share in the campaign for Free Trade has not been sufficiently recognised. Asquith's feat of dogging the footsteps of Joseph Chamberlain from platform to platform was supreme; but the President of the League was scarcely less busy. In 1903, at an agricultural meeting at Bishop-Stortford (June 11th), at a great Liberal League dinner in London (June 12th) and at a meeting of its Sheffield branch (October 13th) he had hammered away at the Chamberlain projects without qualification and without reserve. As he was well entitled to do, he examined most closely the Imperial aspect of the policy, his proposition being that "this proposal would tend to dislocate, and in time dissolve, the bonds of union of the Empire." The defence and the diplomacy of the Empire were at the charge of this country, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier's preference in the Canadian tariff was an acknowledgment of this. There could be no fair or practicable Imperial Tariff.

This controversy is not closed to-day, but it is impossible here even to summarise the arguments, adorned by witty illustration, which he developed in this speech and in that at Leicester. He pursued the topic in South London (November 25th). Towards

the close of an animated speech, he asked, "Will the Government fool these people once again?" A rhetorical pause, during which "a voice" called out, "Not if you will take the lead," and the whole audience rose, waving hats and handkerchiefs. Rosebery raised a laugh by quietly repeating his question; but such incidents, even when harmony reigned in the party, made the paradox of his position painfully obvious.

There was also a great Free Trade demonstration in Edinburgh (December 13th). The regular Association and the League had formed a United Free Trade Committee, and Rosebery had to address two large and excited gatherings (February 17th). In the following spring he spoke of the party fortunes being at the high-water mark of 1880, so that it would be fatuous not to force the Government to resign; and at a League meeting (February 28th) he considered the reunion of the party permanent. But the League should not be dissolved until the party, in office, carried its principles into effect. He again passionately urged the Imperial objections to the Chamberlain proposals.

Again at Newcastle (March 15th), and at Lincoln (September 20th), he uttered a general indictment of the Government—no high courage or high aims, and unable to deal straightforwardly with the nation. The whole series of these speeches, which was carried on at Glasgow at the City Liberal Club (December 5th), and in a most amusing speech in the House of Lords (March 19th, 1905) on fiscal policy and the Colonial Conference, up to the time (June 5th) when the Government's prolonged adhesion to Downing Street at last broke down—deserves fuller examination than it is possible to give it here.

But one or two other subjects of public importance engaged his attention. He spoke in the House (March 5th, 1901) on the unlucky squabble between

Lords Lansdowne and Wolseley on War Office administration, rather taking the part of the latter, and in the painful debate which followed a few days later (March 15th). He assisted Lord Wolseley's demand for justificatory papers, which obtained good support but of course was defeated. The Government was said to have promised an inquiry into the operations in South Africa, and when the committee on the purchase of horses reported, Rosebery spoke at length on Tweedmouth's motion for an inquiry, which the Government refused.

"Lord Kitchener declared the horses were 'flatcatchers.' The Government—if I may say so unofficially—are, after their electoral campaign, good judges of what 'flatcatchers' are."

The Government was goaded by frequent questionings to the appointment of the Esher Committee on War Office Reorganisation in 1904. Rosebery, before knowing of this, had written to Lord Esher (September 4th, 1903):

"My policy is a free hand to Kitchener to organise on the basis of an Admiralty Board, to prepare the way for such a board. I would give him a limited time for this, and then make him, if possible, first Lord of the new board, with the option or reversion of being Chief of the Staff."

Both in the House of Lords and on more than one platform he had advocated the appointment of Lord Kitchener as Secretary of State for War. It needed a still greater military crisis to force this solution on Government or country.

Rosebery's judgment on a step of great moment in foreign policy for once placed him in a minority of his fellow-countrymen. In the summer of 1904 Lord Lansdowne concluded with M. Delcassé the Anglo-French Agreement. Its general effect was the recognition of our occupation of Egypt, the *quid pro quo* being admission of French interests in Morocco. A

section of the coast was to be neutralised, and Spanish interests were to be borne in mind. Any causes of dispute in Siam were also to disappear. The Agreement was popular, but Rosebery saw the seeds of danger in it. He had been sent Mr. M. Aflalo's book *The Truth About Morocco*, in which Ministers were arraigned. His reply ran :

August 4th, 1904.—"All criticism of the Anglo-French Agreement (though that instrument is so much worse for us than the author of the book foreboded) is lost in a generous clamour of pleasure at good relations with France. I doubt if there be any who do not share in that pleasure ; no one certainly feels it more completely than I. . . . But in my judgment this unhappy Agreement is much more likely to promote than to prevent unfriendliness in the not distant future. . . . My mournful and supreme conviction in the matter is that this Agreement is much more likely to lead to complication than to peace."

At the City Liberal Club (March 9th, 1905), describing himself as "a well-known and conspicuous heretic" in the matter, he spoke of "the inestimable boon of a good understanding with France," but expressed the deepest doubt about the Treaty. He discriminated entirely between King Edward's work in founding a good understanding and this unfortunate superstructure. He was never going to refer to the subject again.

He was severely taken to task by *The Times* for this speech, and found it impossible to drop the subject altogether. At Stourbridge (October 26th), while reiterating his scepticism, he deprecated the notion that friendship with France must mean animosity to Germany. But the criticisms still went on, and at Bodmin he felt obliged to recur to the Agreement. He had never recanted his view of the complications which were likely to result, and in effect, he said, have resulted.

"I see that in the press I am called a Germanophil, because I am not friendly to this particular treaty. I am a friend of

Germany just as I am a friend of France and of every civilised and Christian country in Europe. But when it comes to a conflict of interests, I repeat that I am the friend of no Power but Great Britain. If, perhaps, I had any natural predisposition to any special friendship with any foreign country, it would be with France. I scarcely know a word of German, I have scarcely any German friends. But I love French literature, I love many French people; I am a great deal in France, and I have given a practical proof of my friendship in a way which, perhaps, may not be agreeable to everybody here. In writing a book about Napoleon, I took the French as against the English view. It would not be pleasant for me when I next visit France to find that owing to misrepresentation I was considered an enemy of that country."

It must be noted that Rosebery's objections were solely based on the likelihood of our being involved in Moroccan complications, a thing which did in fact occur. His remarks have no bearing on the later developments of the *entente*.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NEW CENTURY AND REIGN: MORE PRESSURE
FROM LIBERALS: REASONS FOR ABSTENTION:
MISUNDERSTANDINGS: THE NEW LIBERAL GOVERN-
MENT: RECTORIAL ADDRESSES

THE death of Queen Victoria in January 1901 had closed a chapter of history. The new century opened out a vista of great possibilities for a Sovereign in the prime of his powers. King Edward had long admitted Rosebery to his close confidence, and he was now consulted on a variety of matters, great and small, either directly or through Francis Knollys. As the infant century progressed it seemed likely that the next Government would be of Liberal complexion; for Leaguers and anti-Leaguers alike lent willing hands against the Education Bill of 1902 and in support of Free Trade from 1903. In past years the King had treated Gladstone with the utmost consideration, and he had no prejudice against Liberals as such. Indeed, he had always known intimately some of the leaders and some of the rank and file; while several of the gentlemen of his Household had made no secret of their progressive opinions. It seemed likely, then, that Rosebery might before long be dragged from his retirement to advise the Crown. Campbell-Bannerman had long been liked at Court; but the accident of Lady Campbell-Bannerman's annual cure at Marienbad did not bring her husband into close contact with the Sovereign until 1904.

Meanwhile, not only Rosebery's former Imperialist colleagues but some who were not Liberal Leaguers, such as Lord Spencer, declined to treat his retirement as definite. So, and with still greater enthusiasm, did a cluster of younger Liberals who had imbibed the

pure milk of the League. They were all good Imperialists, and mostly lukewarm Home Rulers. Headed by Ronald Ferguson, the group included Freeman Thomas,¹ destined to climb the highest peaks of national service; the two sons of Sir Charles Tennant; Rowland Barran of Leeds; James Mellor Paulton ("Harry" Paulton to his many friends), son of a notable Lancashire Liberal; and other Members of Parliament.

Since the disruption of 1896 the Liberal Press had found three journalists of the first rank in capacity and character to represent the three sections of the party—E. T. Cook, a convinced Imperialist, in Rosebery's inner confidence; J. A. Spender, bringing the culture of Balliol into Fleet Street, and making the *Westminster Gazette* the voice of the Liberal Centre; and H. W. Massingham, whose pungent and accomplished pen set forth the moral greatness of Little England. There was some pretty ringcraft over the capture and recapture of the *Daily News* and the *Daily Chronicle*, in which Rosebery acted as "judicious bottle-holder" to the Imperialist champion.

During these years of mingled suspense and activity, when, as somebody said at the time, Arthur Balfour was obstructing the King's Highway, and Joseph Chamberlain was driving to the public danger, Rosebery employed his leisure in jotting down a number of memoranda on the situation as he saw it. He also wrote drafts of letters destined never to be sent. In one (September 1903), "suppressed for indiscretion," he replied to the League Secretaries, who had sent a formal letter urging him to make more speeches.

"As for the 'call of the country,' 'the desire of the Liberal party,' those are empty phrases of which I know the flatulence. Had the Liberal party entertained the 'desire' you speak of it would have joined the League. As it is, one or both of the leaders of the Liberal party is engaged in hypothetically forming a Government which will succeed this

¹ Created Baron Willingdon 1910 and Viscount 1924; Governor-General of Canada 1926-31; Viceroy of India and Earl of Willingdon 1931.

one, and which will be enthusiastically supported and betrayed by the leaders of Radical opinion. On the other hand, the 'call of the country' is expressed in such a whisper that I having a shocking ear have not caught it. My duty and sole duty is to the Liberal League."

Certainly this was not exactly "discreet"; but about the same time (September 30th, 1903) he drew up a serious statement of his position:

"Why do I say that it is impossible for me to form a Government?

"The physical and personal causes I record elsewhere. The political are equally serious.

"1. I should not bring harmony to the Liberal party. I shall always be (and justly) an object of suspicion to the Radical party or rather to the pro-Boer, pro-Armenian, pro-Macedonian and generally hysterical section of it. A less obnoxious person might be able to work with them. I do not blame these people, nor do I blame myself. I simply record a natural antipathy. Were I more of a humbug I might surmount it. I should also be specially repugnant to the Irish party, where others might not.

"2. As I have stated in public a Liberal Prime Minister who is a peer must possess the signal confidence and indeed enthusiasm of the Liberal party. This I do not and perhaps could never possess. But it is a matter of vital necessity, I could not be a Minister on sufferance. Nor will I return to 1894-5.

"3. There are certain persons—two I think—with whom I could not sit in Cabinet with honour. Now my personal feelings should not prevent the strongest possible Cabinet being formed. Personally, I think that either of these two men, given fair play and no favour, would wreck any Government. But that is no reason why those who trust them (if there be such) or believe in their powers should not employ them. I could not, and so, again, I should be a cause of division.

"4. I have only indeed a score of followers in the House of Commons, and so it may seem absurd to discuss the question. It is possible and even probable, however, that were I invited to form a Government a large mass of M.P.s would gravitate towards me. But they would equally gravitate towards any-

one else in the same position. And as I count only on my score, I could not attempt to form a Government with dignity or propriety. A man in the House of Commons might succeed under these circumstances, but not a peer.

"5. As to the physical and personal causes referred to in the beginning, they may be summed up by saying that I should not be efficient.

"6. I am not and cannot make myself enough of a party man. Since 1896 I seem to myself to have shed party feeling.

"7. And the people who should form a party Ministry are its appointed leaders who have borne the burden and heat of the day; not I who long ago severed myself from party connection.

"These reasons are very familiar to me. They were familiar to me before Chesterfield, and nothing since has occurred to alter them. I have never had news of office since 1896. And now the only new question that occurs is whether my presence in politics as I am, is not a hindrance rather than a help to those I wish to serve? It seemed to me that an independent voice in politics might sometimes be of service. But I am quite prepared for the opinion that such a voice is an embarrassment, and should be silenced."

Personal Disqualifications.

"1. My memory, my power of application, my hearing, and my general vigour are all impaired. I especially complain, as a disability, of my loss of recollection of faces and names, so that I enter every room as a stranger, unable almost to greet anyone who does not first greet me, and even then unable to recall their names. This is fatal for a political leader, or even a member of society.

"2. In the last seven years, since I left party politics, I have fallen into a solitary habit of life which I should now find it impossible altogether to abandon.

"3. But, mainly and principally, I have an absolute conviction that were I to return to office I should once more be sleepless. My occasional speaking experiences make this evident. Now there would be no harm in this if it only meant death, for there could be no better death. But the horror is that it means life and office and total incapacity in both. I cannot forget 1895. To lie night after night, staring wide awake, hopeless of sleep, tormented in nerves, and to realise all that was going on, at which I was present,

so to speak, like a disembodied spirit, to watch one's own corpse as it were, day after day, is an experience which no sane man with a conscience would repeat ; or the repetition of which he could offer as service to his country.

"In fine, my belief is that while urging efficiency I should present in my own person the signal model of inefficiency."

It is a tragic picture to be painted of a man of fifty-six, the idol of a devoted band girded up to follow his lead to any heights that he would scale, free from any apparent ailment that could cripple his energies, and in the plenitude of his powers of speech and command. To examine its content for a moment—of the two impossible colleagues, Harcourt was obviously one ; the other could only be Campbell-Bannerman. The reunion of November 1903 had not in truth cancelled the sentence of "definite separation" pronounced in February 1902 ; and of this separation the Liberal League was the living witness.

The other reference to be noted is that of "an independent voice in politics" that might sometimes be of service. Later he realised more completely that in our party system no such voice, however eloquent, could be raised to guide public opinion at difficult moments. None in fact ever has been. A man who had gained a name for great public services outside party might conceivably fill such a place. If the Duke of Wellington had not joined the straitest sect of the Tories, perhaps he might ; and even as it was, once or twice he tried to advise his friends to set aside party feeling for the sake of the country. A Wilberforce or a Shaftesbury, sacrificing further philanthropic laurels for high politics, might have won the nation's heart as a constitutional adviser. Not so the retired leader of a party. Men of long political experience, such as the 3rd Lord Grey, Lord Russell, the Duke of Argyll, *rude donati*, from time to time gave the world the benefit of their reflections in letters to *The Times*, or in short pamphlets. These were read with interest and respect ; but the surface of the political lake was scarcely rippled. Rosebery at this time was far from

falling into this category. But all the fascination of his personality could not prevent people from seeing in him a party politician, only differing from others by the fact that he could not quite agree with either party as it stood at the moment.

In October 1904 Sir William Harcourt died. He and Rosebery had seldom met of late, but they were on terms of courtesy, and when Harcourt had a sharp operation early in 1903, Rosebery made a sympathetic and complimentary reference to him in public. In the previous year there had been an amusing experience at the Guildhall banquet to the new Sovereigns (October 25th, 1902):

"Sate between the Italian Ambassador, Pansa, and Harcourt, exactly opposite C.-B. Harcourt very pleasant. He said, 'I wonder if I took one of those orchids and put it in my buttonhole I should be taken for Joe?' . . . The Queen lovely in white with the Garter riband and diamond insignia. She and the King much amused at my environment."

Lord Kimberley had also gone, and Lord Spencer's health foreboded the calamitous illness that attacked him a year later. Reginald Brett, now succeeding as Lord Esher, was at Balmoral, and sent a long letter to Rosebery in which some inspiration from the writer's illustrious host was suspected. After recounting the party's losses, he maintained that the position was changed by Rosebery's decided lead against the *whole* policy of the Government. "How can you reconcile it to your conscience to turn out the Government unless you are ready to form another?" Esher proceeded to a shrewd analysis of the leaders remaining—"C.-B.—Asquith—E. Grey," and concluded with an appeal almost *verbatim* the same as those which had succeeded in 1892. There was no such success now. Rosebery answered curtly:

DALMENY, October 6th, 1904.

"MY DEAR R.,

"Many thanks for your letter. But for the life of me I can see no change in the political situation which affects

me in the slightest degree. Certainly the removal of an old man who had retired from politics does not.

“Yours,
“AR.”

But once more he wrote (October 14th, 1904) a long memorandum on his position. After sketching the earlier history of his resignation, the Chesterfield speech, his breach with Campbell-Bannerman, and the formation of the Liberal League, he observed :

“It is said in one striking letter to *The Times*, and by many others in private, notably Mr. Lloyd George, that I should undertake a campaign, like Mr. Gladstone’s in Midlothian, and so to speak—though it is not so expressed—force myself on the country and the Liberal party.

“Putting all disparities between Mr. Gladstone and myself on one side, there is an obvious answer to this—that I should only be the cat pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for others with whom I should not agree . . . moreover my hostility to Home Rule and to the Anglo-French Convention, both expressed with extreme emphasis, would act as considerable bars if not total disqualifications.

“I have in fact at this juncture the confidence of neither the Crown, the House of Commons, either party, or the public at large. Those are strange foundations on which to rear political ambitions, had I any desire that way. . . .

“But it is urged on me if you cannot be the head of a Government, ought you not to undertake the Foreign Office (were it offered) from a sense of public duty? Those who talk like this are ignorant of the interior of the last two Liberal Governments. I carried on foreign policy in those Cabinets in a minority of one. In the Cabinet of 1886 the absorption in Home Rule enabled me to do this. In 1892–5 it was one long battle, carried on in silence in 1893 after fierce combats in 1892, and again with daily contest in 1894–5. Such a condition of things is not fair either to the Minister or the Government. The strain on the Minister is excessive, while it is not fair to the Government that he should carry on a policy which is not theirs. . . .

“My conclusion is clear—that the next Liberal Government should represent the official and dominant forces of Liberalism and be as homogeneous as possible. That would exclude me, even if I had a wish instead of an aversion for office.

"Oh, but, say others, Mr. Gladstone in 1880 swept down on official Liberalism, and dominated it, and formed his own Government. My answer is simple :

"1. I am not Mr. Gladstone.

"2. I am not in the House of Commons.

"To which I would add :

"3. That the Government was a failure.

"4. That I always thought, even in 1880, and think now, that Mr. Gladstone should not have taken office."

This final judgment is striking, and it is right to add that it is surprising to anybody who had studied Rosebery's correspondence of 1879 and 1880. Nor is it easy to conjecture what would have been the fate of a Hartington or Granville administration in the latter year. It is reasonable to surmise that Rosebery, when writing "failure," had in his mind Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy, and to some extent his foreign policy so far as it differed from Rosebery's own.

He recapitulated many of the same arguments in a letter to Mr. J. A. Spender at almost the same time, adding, for the benefit of that trusted journalist :

"I never was so unsupported in the party or the country. The Press except the *Leeds Mercury* were unanimously hostile, putting on one side the neutrality of the cold-blooded *Westminster Gazette*."

He felt it impossible to make any announcement such as was suggested, but would continue to hold his peace. When the next spring came he drew a modest picture of himself :

May 2nd, 1905.

"From my own point of view (which seems however to be imperfectly understood, or rather not understood at all) I am not dissatisfied with the last three years.

"I have striven for the public good without even the remotest personal interest. I am not a candidate for any office, even the humblest. There is no merit in that, for after ten years of comparative freedom I should ill accommodate myself to official bonds. Nor am I any longer fit for it, according to the high standard which I conceive to be necessary. I have not sought popularity—maybe I have

sought unpopularity. I have said the things which it was necessary to say, and yet which no one who aimed at popularity or even acceptability could say. They have, however, been said, and I believe that my sacrifice—for in a sense it is a sacrifice—has not been fruitless.

“I have made moreover an even greater sacrifice than popularity. I have left the life I love and engaged in the life I hate. I have done this for two reasons :

“1. To save what I believe to be the sound core or group of the Liberal party from extinction. Ever since Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman spoke to me of Asquith’s movement as a ‘rebellion’ which ‘had been crushed,’ I saw that close union and effort was necessary to avert the blighting effects of official proscription. This I think has been effected ; and the official Liberal chiefs find that before taking office they have as their first and most formidable task to reckon with the Liberal League ; an organisation in no way hostile to them, but determined to maintain a certain tone and spirit in politics, which it is the object of the Extreme Left to extinguish.

“2. To further a Liberal victory. Ever since the great smash of 1895, when I was nominally leader, followed by the still greater smash of 1900, I have been anxious to do what I honestly could to further the return of the Liberals to power, on a sound basis. Here too I think that I have not been useless, by retaining and perhaps attracting men of moderate views, as well as by attacking the Government. Men of extreme views will probably say that I have done more harm than good, but they are not sound or cool judges. I do not think that I have been of much use, but still not without use.

“There is no doubt that I could have done much more, had I thrown myself headlong into the fray, and conducted a strenuous political campaign, as my friends, and even Lloyd George last year, have constantly urged. This however was not possible, for two if not three reasons. For had I been successful I—

“1. Should have been compelled to take office, which has never been in my contemplation :

“2. Might have displaced the two official leaders of the Liberal party, which I had no wish to do. It would have annoyed them and me almost equally. And—

“3. There might have been caused a schism in the Liberal party, which, though it may and perhaps must come, I should not like to be caused by me.”

But he was not allowed to hold his peace for good. The Liberal League was there, as keen as any other Liberal organisation to defeat the Government, and when its annual meeting came round in the following spring he was expected to utter a political pronouncement. This he did with fullness, dealing with foreign and colonial policy, education, housing, preaching progress in domestic reforms in the general terms usual to a speaker in Opposition. On Ireland he merely begged for a general statement of their main policy from the party leaders. But he soon became more explicit. In his speeches at Stourbridge and in Cornwall, already mentioned in another connection, he spoke out. At Stourbridge (October 25th, 1905) he presented the dilemma that the Liberal chiefs must either make Home Rule the first measure in a new Parliament, or drop it altogether for the time being :

“ Any middle policy—that of placing Home Rule in the position of a reliquary, and only exhibiting it at great moments of public stress, as Roman Catholics are accustomed to exhibit relics of a saint—is not one which will earn sympathy or success in this country.”

He was in Cornwall a month later. On November 23rd Campbell-Bannerman spoke at Stirling. He advised the Irish to accept any instalment of representative control “ provided it was consistent with, and led up to, the larger policy.” At Bodmin Rosebery fastened on this expression. Free Trade was the dominant issue, and the party unity must be maintained. But he objected to the raising of the banner of Home Rule, and said “ emphatically and explicitly and once for all, I cannot serve under that banner.” The speech was delivered under an unlucky misapprehension, as the following note of Rosebery’s makes clear. But the divergence went deeper. Rosebery had ceased to be a Home Ruler in the strict sense, but some of his Liberal League colleagues had not. The wording of the note is

singularly restrained. It was written after the four League Vice-Presidents had joined Campbell-Bannerman's Government.

"On Friday, November 24th, I read the abstract of C.-Bannerman's speech at Stirling in the Western newspapers, and, in a speech at Truro that evening, I gave fair warning that that speech had filled me with some misgivings, but that I should await a fuller report before pronouncing a definite opinion. On the next day I received a fuller report, and pronounced, at Bodmin, my definite opinion that that speech raised the Home Rule question in a pronounced form.

"I may mention, though I attach no importance to the fact, that all the M.P.s staying in the house with me shared that judgment ; only that some, notably Mr. Fletcher Moulton, were much more violent.

"I arrived in London on November 28th, and there found—from a note written by Edward Grey—that Asquith, and through him Haldane and Grey, had arrived at an understanding some time before with C.-Bannerman, who had assured them that his Irish policy was identical with that declared recently by Asquith, and that the Stirling speech was the outcome of this concordat between the Vice-Presidents of the League and C.-Bannerman.

"It was an oversight that I was not told of this ; an unfortunate oversight, in view of the fact that I was speaking daily in Cornwall and that I had given fair warning on November 24th of the line I was likely to take on November 25th. It was also lamentable, because I was quite ready to ignore the Stirling speech ; for, as under no circumstances did I propose to take office in C.-Bannerman's Government, I was not anxious to challenge any part of the policy of the imminent Government ; and yet, owing to the oversight, I said what I did, and caused some friction in the Free Trade party, which I had been trying so hard to consolidate.

"However, I may fairly hope that no harm was done. The Stirling speech will probably have lost my interpretation before the General Election, and the vice-presidents were able to join the Government at once, under their private understanding ; except I believe Edward Grey, who showed reluctance to serve under C.-Bannerman as leader of the House of Commons. None of them embarrassed me by

consulting or communicating with me, which was considerate on their part. They were well aware that I was not prepared to accept office in any shape, and so communication with me would only have compromised them needlessly, and possibly me, too. The oversight was due no doubt to the fact that as they knew that I would not take office, communication had naturally become slack, and that in fact from October 22nd, when I left him at Dalmeny, till December 11th, when I shook hands with him at my large reception, I had no communication, direct or indirect, with Asquith, though he was carrying on negotiations with C.-Bannerman. It was I think natural that he should not reveal these to one who was not going to be a colleague, but it is none the less a pity that he forgot to inform me of the pact relating to Ireland, which would have prevented what seemed like a schism; more especially as I had given fair warning on November 24th of my first impressions. A telegram then would have stopped my saying anything. That he should forget, in view of the large calls on his time, is easily to be understood."

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman became Prime Minister on December 5th, and the hopes which almost to the last Rosebery's friends had cherished, that he would add strength to another Liberal Cabinet, were finally shattered. In his solitude at Naples in the early summer he had made a cool estimate of the probable situation:

"I am beginning to be perplexed as to what I shall do when the new Liberal Government is safely installed. It seems to me plain that my best course would be total and final retirement.

"But I have not found total and final retirement easy in the past.

"It would however be much easier in the future, unless I am much mistaken; for I cannot see who would wish to draw me from it. Formerly, there were only too many. But hereafter there will I think be none.

"What alternative indeed is there? I could speak as now independently. But defence may not be easy, and criticism would be open to hopeless misconstruction. Even as small a detail as to the side of the table I should speak from presents difficulty. The only argument that I can see

against retirement is the future of Liberal Imperialism. The next Government will be radical, perhaps extremely radical; it will at any rate not be Liberal Imperialist. It will contain a notable nucleus indeed of that description, but this will tend to drift away; and will be impelled by the forces behind it in a very different direction.

"I may note that I have done my best for the cause, but have been baffled by the party machine. I acknowledge that I did not realise the strength of the machine—the *ingens Machina*. But the machine is a permanent force; it will retain its jealousy of and enmity to whatever is extraneous to it. And I should be infinitely weaker than now in opposition to it.

"I am indeed beginning to doubt if the fierce play of party admits of an independent political position. It is little to say this, for everybody has long been convinced of it. I am not quite but nearly convinced.

"Is it then worth while to spend the few remaining years of one's life in embarrassing one's friends in office by maintaining an independent political position, and raising the voice of one crying in the wilderness? The question answers itself.

"True, the ideas may permeate and leaven. But is even that limited effect worth the continued maintenance of an attitude of virtue between two opposing lines of battle, exposed to the fire of both? That is my present condition; it cannot be permanently prolonged.

"There is no doubt the Liberal League. Will the League continue to exist? On that I cannot pronounce with certainty, but I should say not. Politicians do not care to preach and parade in a wilderness. The fruitful oasis of bounty and patronage will be elsewhere.

"Seeing then no other considerations of public welfare I think I see clear and near the time at which I shall bid a final farewell to the political scene.

"AR."

It will be seen that there was no formal farewell until the moment came when all controversial politics withered before the blast of war. But during the intervening years he took his own line, heading no group, sitting on the cross-benches in the House of Lords, as powerful as ever in speech, but without the

backing with which even the very strongest cannot dispense.

The Liberal League continued to attract Rosebery's personal supporters, though its special purpose no longer existed. It had not entirely succeeded in this ; but it had by no means failed in its appeal to one type of genuine Liberalism. Rosebery presided at the Annual Meeting in December 1905, and made a reasoned defence of his speech at Bodmin.

The League remained dormant in 1906 ; but he spoke again at a Council Meeting in 1907, showing marked mistrust of the Government, especially as being too prone to make large promises. He was moved to one prophecy :

"The Liberal party may through some of its members find itself permanently connected with hostility to property in all its forms. If so, I venture to predict that, at no distant time, it will find itself squeezed out between Socialism and Conservatism. Socialism can promise much more to the predatory elements in politics ; Conservatism can afford much more confidence to those who wish to keep things as they are."

The following year (March 12th, 1908) there was another great meeting, when Rosebery spoke with more favour of the Liberal Government as a bulwark against Socialism. This time he discussed the future of the League. He had doubted whether it should be continued, "having amply achieved its purpose, but had been overridden by active members of the Association." At the end of 1907 (December 26th) he wrote to Mr. Perks :

". . . I am inclined to allow events to develop themselves before coming to a decision. We are between two difficulties : our nominally League M.P.s, who are a sort of quicksand, and the provisional stalwarts (who are not a few), who form a rock full of sharp points. I think it probable that we should arouse as much resentment among the latter as gratitude among the former if we dissolved, i.e. we should displease our real friends and please those who wish to leave us. And

yet *cui bono* ? At present I see no answer to this ; while you and I are, more or less, in bonds. This is not a perfect survey, but it is not far from the mark.

“ Yrs.,

“ AR.”

It will be recalled that the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow University had been snatched from Rosebery by an untoward chance. Some years later (November 16th, 1900) he was elected and delivered his Rectorial Address. For once he did not choose a Scottish subject, but he turned to one very near his heart—the British Empire. From a general sketch of our inheritance and our obligations he passed to one of the fascinating might-have-beens of history :

“ Had the elder Pitt, when he became First Minister, not left the House of Commons, he would probably have retained his sanity and his authority. He would have prevented, or suppressed, the reckless budget of Charles Townshend, have induced George III to listen to reason, have introduced representatives from America into the Imperial Parliament, and preserved the thirteen American colonies to the British Crown. Is it fanciful to dwell for a moment on what might have happened ? The Reform Bill which was passed in 1832 would probably have been passed much earlier ; for the new blood of America would have burst the old vessels of the Constitution. It would have provided for some self-adjusting system of representation, such as now prevails in the United States, by which increasing population is proportionately represented. And at last, when the Americans became the majority, the seat of Empire would perhaps have been moved solemnly across the Atlantic, and Britain have become the historical shrine and the European outpost of the world empire. . . . It would have been the most sublime transference of power known to mankind. Our conceptions can scarcely picture the procession across the Atlantic, the greatest sovereign in the greatest fleet in the universe, Ministers, Government, Parliament, departing solemnly for the other hemisphere, not, as in the case of the Portuguese sovereigns emigrating to Brazil, under the spur

of necessity, but under the vigorous embrace of the younger world. . . . Above all, had there been no separation there would have been no War of Independence, no War of 1812, with all the bitter memories that these have left on American soil. To secure that priceless boon I could have been satisfied to see the British Federal Parliament sitting in Columbia Territory."

Setting aside this wondrous day-dream, he noted the changed relation of Britain to the world. The colonial passion of other powers was not of direct importance to us, who do not desire to increase our territories, but indirectly it raises delicate and disputable points. "Are we," he asked, "too complacent?" The example of Prussia's recovery after the Napoleonic wars has a lesson for us. Are we training enough first-rate men for our developed responsibilities? Should Greek be any longer a compulsory subject? And is not an insidious luxury becoming prevalent? He asked, "Whether our land is not becoming the playground and pleasure of the plutocrats of all nations?" Even healthy sport, like other good things, can be overdone. In a word, are we thorough enough? And again he referred to Germany and the United States, their commerce and industry. Rosebery waved no flags in the address.

"From my point of view," he said, "there is not a close in the darkest quarters of Glasgow, or a crofter's cabin in the Hebrides, which is not a matter of imperial concern; quite as truly, in its proportion and degree, as those more glowing topics to which that adjective is too often limited. And mark this, in all that I have said there is no word of war, not even the beat of a drum or the distant singing of a bullet. To some the Empire is little else, and that makes many hate the word. That is not my view. Our Empire is not founded on the precedents associated with that name, it is not the realm of conquest which that term has been wont to imply. It has often used the sword, it could not exist without the sword, but it does not live by the sword. Defence and readiness to fight are vital enough in their way, but not less vital is the civil and domestic side: the commerce, the education,

the intelligence, the unceasing leaven of a high and sour decadence of a low ideal. War and conquest can fill the lives of but a part of the nation : a sane and simple duty to the Empire may well inspire the whole."

The address concluded with a glowing peroration of fine eloquence in a like vein.

Eight years afterwards (June 12th, 1908) Rosebery spoke again at Glasgow, this time as Chancellor of the University. The veteran Lord Stair had died at the end of 1903, and was succeeded in his office by Lord Kelvin, a son of Glasgow, whose great career was bound up with the Scottish city, but bequeathed a world-wide inheritance of applied science. This time Rosebery recurred to his home-land, and in a most scholarly address traced the influence of the national Universities on the Scottish character. It does not lend itself greatly to verbal quotation, but on the text that the modern tendency was to swamp self-reliance, he spoke of it as the—

"Scottish characteristic, the heart of Scottish independence and Scottish success. That is the stamp that I would fain see the University of Glasgow affix to her teaching and to the graduates whom she sends into the world."

It has been mentioned that St. Andrews, the senior University, had long declined to nominate a Liberal Lord Rector. By 1910 any partisan tint of Rosebery's had become extremely faint; and in the following year (September 14th, 1911), the Five Hundredth Anniversary of its foundation, the University welcomed the delivery of his Rectorial Address. He appreciated the signal honour of being chosen for this occasion. The result was one of his most exquisite utterances, equally marked by historical research and by the play of romantic fancy. The central conception was that of the first Lord Rector of 1411 as a Strulldbrug. Dean Swift, as everybody knows, imagined these unhappy beings as doomed to immortality, while subject to all the infirmities of old age. In the

Greek legend Zeus showed more mercy to the aspiring mortal. Rosebery, with a quite unerring touch, pictured the veteran watching the tragedies of Scottish annals, the bloodshed, the martyrdoms, the final freedom from religious intolerance, the universal sway of justice in later days. He would hear the shriek of despair that greeted the Union, and then see how Scotland rose and throve by neglect. He would sum up with the words :

“ Be of good cheer. . . . I have seen life and death and glory chasing each other like shadows on a summer sea, and all has seemed to be vanity. But I remain in the conviction that, though individuals may suffer, when we take stock of a century at its end, we shall find that the world is better and happier than it was at the beginning. *Sursum corda*. Lift up your hearts, for the world is moving onward. It is guided from above, and guided we may be sure with wisdom and goodness which will not abandon us. That is the comfort which even in blackest darkness must afford light.”

NAPOLEON

Rosebery's judgment of mankind, in the pages of history, and under his own eyes, was always biased by his estimate of the strength of an individual character or intellect. He was not harsh to amiable weakness, but it repelled him. In public life he had little toleration for the class which John Morley, with almost affectionate derision, loved to describe as “ the simpletons.” Perhaps too little ; for, after all, every noble cause and movement, from the early Christian Church down to the Abolition of Slavery and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, has owed much to the enthusiasm of “ simpletons.” Be that as it may, it was the strong fibre of Cromwell and the Pitts, father and son, that won his historical loyalty ; the intellectual power of Gladstone, and the supple vigour of Disraeli, that awakened his young ambition ; the massive power of Bismarck and Cavour, the soaring energy of Cecil Rhodes, that fascinated him in his

active years. So that it was not surprising that he made a special study of Napoleon. And with his diligent collector's *flair* he brought together a remarkable series of portraits and autographs of the Emperor, besides a mass of State papers of his time. It at last became almost a joke that friends, hunting for an appropriate birthday gift, filled his rooms with Napoleonic relics of genuine or dubious authenticity. It is safe to say that no historical figure has inspired the production of a mass of literature approaching that in which Napoleon's fame is smothered. Napoleon as a youth in Corsica, Napoleon as a soldier, Napoleon as a statesman, Napoleon and the Church, Napoleon and women—the volumes would overcrowd any average library. Rosebery sat down to write a monograph on the phase in which the credit of Britain is especially at stake, that of Napoleon's exile to St. Helena. He applied himself to the task with the closest diligence, and the result was *Napoleon, the Last Phase*, first published in 1908. He had studied all the narratives of the Emperor's companions, and practically all the commentaries on them by French and other writers. The book is a large quarto of some 250 pages on the sombre episode of St. Helena, as he calls it—"not a bright page for either Great Britain or Napoleon; it consorts with the dignity of neither." It was an attempt to penetrate the darkness which surrounds the last act of the Napoleonic drama, and thus Rosebery justifies it.

He could not help asking, "Why collate these morbid, sordid, insincere chronicles? Does not history tell us that there is nothing so melancholy as the aspect of great men in retirement?" He wrote his book, he explained, partly to lay a literary ghost, dormant for years and only quickened by stimulating leisure. Again, because the final judgment of History had not yet been recorded, and lastly because Napoleon the *man* appeared then as he never had before.

The book cannot be other than melancholy reading, but nobody can fail to admire its thoroughness and

genuine impartiality. If, as he told an English audience,¹ he seemed to have taken the French side, it was because the facts as he saw them led him there. The book has not the charm of the *Churchill* monograph; but it is bound to survive as the best documented and most sympathetic narration of those six heart-breaking years. A great deal still remains unrecorded and mysterious about them.

Rosebery's interest in Napoleon and in French literature was further shown, in 1912, by his French Introduction to Comte Albert Vandal's *L'Avènement de Bonaparte* in the Collection Nelson.

The other important outcome of Rosebery's leisure was *Chatham, his Early Life and Connections*, published in 1910. He had full access to the family papers at Dropmore and to others at Holland House. Chatham's Life has never been written at full length, and Rosebery decided that, strictly speaking, it never can be. His book gives a delightful picture of William Pitt's youth, with copious extracts from the Dropmore correspondence with his sisters, and it tells of the amazing rise to wealth and power of the Temple-Grenville stock. The story goes on with a sketch of the leading actors then on the political stage, and of continental affairs. It carries through the complicated tale of European warfare till Pitt's accession to office in 1746, right up to the formation of the Duke of Devonshire's administration in 1756, in which Pitt was the leading figure.

The book is eminently readable, with many of the happy touches that were Rosebery's own, reminiscent of Macaulay's, but generally with a lighter hand. He was dissatisfied with it himself, and it never attained the popularity of his *Pitt*. Perhaps he tried to do rather too much, or too little. He found himself swimming in *gurgite vasto* of European politics, and there was no apparent reason why the book should close just before the most glorious act of the Chatham drama. The conclusion, therefore, seems

¹ See p. 582.

to be more abrupt and artificial than that of Trevelyan's fascinating *Early Life of Charles James Fox*.

Rosebery's comparative desertion from political platforms, except on the Free Trade issue, set him free on more of the uncontroversial occasions when his speeches sounded with the happiest ring. In 1901, first in Edinburgh (January 31st), and then in the shadow of the ruined Palace of Linlithgow (February 7th), he moved Addresses of condolence and welcome on the King's accession. His knowledge of history and of contemporary Europe, and his deep personal devotion to both Sovereigns, enabled him to pay tributes to Queen Victoria and King Edward with a felicity which no speaker of his time could have emulated. Just before, at the meeting of the Scottish History Society, he had lamented the death of Lord Bute, one of his oldest friends and a man of most original character, living in research of the remote past, and so not receiving the credit which his attainments merited.

Rosebery was not much of a practical gardener; but he was a practical reader, and at the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Show (September 13th, 1901) he was able to please his hearers with excerpts from Bacon's Essays and from John Reid's "*Scots' Gardener*" of Charles II's day. When Scottish Home Industries called him to Glasgow (October 23rd), he complained amid laughter that these, too, were "a little out of my ordinary line of business," but he took occasion to defend Harris tweed from attacks made on it by a correspondent of *The Times* as the den in which countless bacilli lurked. It was not difficult, in that company, to make a case for the work done in Highland shielings.

The 220th Anniversary Dinner of the Company of Merchants of Edinburgh (November 14th) was a graver occasion. But the fiscal controversy was not yet alive, and all that Rosebery did was to express preference for a business Administration in which party machinery would be both useless and forgotten.

On the next day, at the Philosophical Institution, Henry Asquith delivered an admirable address on Biography, which is fortunately included in his published works. Rosebery, when thanked for presiding, complained that he had never been told what the subject of the address would be. However, he named Purcell's *Manning* as one of the great books of biography in the language. In his own Utopia, he proceeded, he would appoint a Board of Censors to decide whose biographies might be written, and whose not. Licensed biographies might be divided into three classes; three volumes, two, or one being permitted to each class. On the other hand, the class permitted to write autobiographies should be infinitely extended, because every truthful autobiography must be interesting.

Everybody must wish that Rosebery had joined that goodly fellowship of autobiographers. But his present biographer may congratulate himself that the skeleton of an autobiography can be articulated from the candid memoranda and notes of which there are so many.

In the winter of that year and in 1902 he was immersed in the political whirlpool, but he came to Glasgow (October 12th, 1902) to unveil Gladstone's statue. It was a non-party occasion, and he delivered a non-party speech, touching in turn on Gladstone's many-sidedness, "to those who were privileged to know him, his politics seemed but the least part of him"; his faith, not only in religion, but in great causes, inspiring him with deep-seated and impervious certainty; his industry, to which an eight-hour day would have been a holiday; his courage, physical no less than moral—"brave among the brave":

"Such lives speak for themselves. They need no statues. They face the future with the confidence of high purpose and endeavour. The statues are not for them, but for us, to bid us be conscious of our trust, mindful of our duty, scornful of opposition to principle and faith."

The Scottish History Society again claimed him for its annual meeting (November 29th, 1903)—when a presentation was made to the indefatigable secretary, Mr. Thomas Law. Rosebery pleaded for the preservation of the family papers, diaries, account-books, and what not of the past, too often neglected or thrown away. Charters were the affairs of special societies; but these humbler records should be the peculiar care of this Society.

Two very different occasions fell on the same snowy day (December 2nd). In the forenoon a tablet was unveiled in St. Giles' to the memory of the 1st Battalion the Royal Scots fallen in the war. Rosebery traced the history of the regiment, and did honour to the glorious dead. In the evening he attended the dinner of the National Fat Stock Club, at whose show he had won a series of prizes. Prizes or no prizes, the fattening industry was vastly expensive to an amateur; but Rosebery, who knew little about it, looked on it as part of his duty to the neighbourhood. So he delighted his professional audience by observing:

"It is by personal, careful, and daily attention to the beasts on my part—by wakeful nights devoted to the corpulence of a particular animal—by handing to every beast his appointed oil-cake from my own hand—it is only by these means that I have been able to obtain success."

Rosebery unveiled the Stevenson Memorial in St. Giles' (June 27th, 1904), of which, eight years before, he had been the true begetter. The best intellect of Edinburgh assembled round the powerful work of the American sculptor St. Gaudens. Rosebery spoke simply, with no further critical estimate of the beloved writer.

He touched on Scottish history again when the Royal Scottish Corporation dined in London (November 30th, 1904), dwelling on the impression of extreme savagery that Scotland produced on strangers even to the end of the eighteenth century: "Is it

not a noble and inspiring thought for all of us that it is from that foundation that springs the Scotland of to-day ? ” He ended by a thought of the Scotsmen scattered all over the Empire, quoting the exquisite stanza—“ From the lone shieling of the misty island ”—that would make the fortune of any poem enshrining it.¹

The Scottish branch of the Associated Booksellers gave him another opportunity of showing his love of letters (June 9th, 1905). Mr. John Murray gave the toast of Literature in a capital speech. Rosebery in his reply took up the proposer’s points, denied his own competence to reply to the health of Homer, Dante, and Voltaire, but claimed that Literature and Education are Edinburgh’s staple products :

“ There is no author bred under the shade of Edinburgh town, no publisher who has learned his business there, who does not feel that *genius loci*, that immemorial tradition, that splendour of historical association which has made Edinburgh what she is, which has made you happy to come here, and us proud to welcome you.”

The Auld Brig of Ayr was threatened with demolition, unless ample funds could be collected to restore it. Rosebery had vowed, he said at a great Ayr meeting (September 25th), never to utter another word about Burns in public. But Burns glorified the Auld Brig, so it was for the poet’s sake that Rosebery had to plead in a forty-minute speech :

“ If every man who has attended a Burns Dinner and shed tears for the memory of Burns, and made speeches about Burns, and recited poems about Burns, and drunk whisky in honour of Burns, if every one of them now living in the world were to send a shilling or even sixpence, why, your coffers would be overflowing, and you would have to gild the Auld Brig in order to expend your funds.”

¹ Rosebery, who at the time disclaimed knowledge of its authorship, afterwards made a learned examination of the different claims that have been made in its regard.

As Lord-Lieutenant Rosebery had to open the vast Asylum at Bangour. His County Council experience made him familiar with his distressing subject, and while praising the accommodation provided, he said that the full blossom of municipal work would not be reached until the worthy workman be provided with the comforts extended to the intellectually ill.

Sir James Gibson Craig had just ceased to be Convener of Midlothian, and was presented (October 18th, 1906) with his portrait after life-long service to the county. Rosebery was able to assert with conviction that Sir James had chosen the wiser part by abstaining from political life :

"All his work has been tangible and useful. Do you think he could have said that if he had gone to the House of Commons ? "

The year after (July 14th, 1907) Rosebery again laid stress on the paramount interest and importance of local affairs when a still older County Convener, Sir Robert Dundas of Arniston, one of the chiefs of that historic family, in turn presented his portrait to the county : "A great Scottish gentleman, and a great Scottish worthy," said Rosebery.

But the most memorable appearance of Rosebery in Edinburgh during these years was the parade of the Scots Greys (November 16th, 1906). The occasion was the unveiling of the Memorial to fallen officers and men ; but it was rendered more acute by a recent order depriving the Scottish garrison of cavalry. At the open-air ceremony, in pouring rain, Rosebery delivered a perfect little discourse. He spoke of the laurels won under Marlborough, at Waterloo, in the Crimea, and now in South Africa :

"Honour to the brave who will return no more. We shall not see their faces again. In the service of their Sovereign and their country they have undergone the sharpness of death, and sleep their eternal sleep, thousands of miles away in the green solitudes of Africa. Their places,

their comrades, their saddles will know them no more, for they will never return to us as we knew them. But in a nobler and a higher sense, have they not returned to us to-day? They return to us with a message of duty, of courage, of patriotism. They return to us with a memory of high duty faithfully performed; they return to us with the inspiration of their example. Peace, then, to their dust, honour to their memory. Scotland for ever!"

At the luncheon afterwards he lamented that a Scottish Secretary of War and a Scottish Prime Minister had brought about the removal of cavalry. What were Scottish Liberal members for? It was a delicate position for Rosebery, whose active lieutenant Haldane had been, but he skated skilfully on the thin ice.

At a great public meeting on the same question (December 3rd) he ridiculed the alleged cost of £200,000 for retaining the regiment: "Scotland, if she asks for ever so little, is always stinted and always starved." And when he distributed prizes to the Midlothian Garrison Artillery Volunteers he returned more hopefully to the same question. In this latter speech (December 9th, 1906) he spoke strongly against any form of obligatory service.

The Ayr Brig appeal came up again. Rosebery was once more summoned to Glasgow. He was able to invent a speech of winning freshness on the old theme: what Burns did for Scotland; what he did for the Church "by dissociating religion from the outward husk of cant in which it was enveloped and withered." And for once he quoted freely from the poet. The Auld Brig was saved, and in July 1910 Rosebery presided at its re-opening.

As a matter of course Rosebery was summoned to the inauguration of Queen Victoria's statue at Leith (October 15th, 1907). The Provost called on him as the orator and mouthpiece of Scotland whenever a great occasion arose. Rosebery's encomium pointed to the conclusion of the whole matter:

"The test of a reign must be the condition of the nation itself—its moral, physical, intellectual welfare; and what reign will better bear that test than the long years of Queen Victoria? . . . In due course Edward the Pacificator follows Victoria the Good. Long may we look to a succession of monarchs deriving their ideas of duty and ambition from this august source."

Soon afterwards there was a series of engagements at Glasgow. Rosebery became a Bonnet-maker and Dyer; and the remarkable Provands Lordship Club, boasting their headquarters at the oldest inhabited house in Scotland, entertained him at dinner—old Scots fare served on pewter, and rum punch, at plain deal tables lit by candles in brass candlesticks. This was delightful, but more serious affairs took him to Glasgow. In August he had spoken strongly in the House of Lords against the Scottish Landholders' Bill, largely because it seemed to burden Scotland with the Irish system of fair rents and fixity of tenure. Now in Glasgow he denounced the measure with great vigour, explaining how it had caused him to break eighteen months of silence on political questions. Mr. Gladstone, he said, would have approached the case with laborious investigation. The crofter system was unsuited to Scotland as a whole; the bill introduced dual ownership, however much that might be denied; and it initiated in Scotland the fatal Irish system of landholding.

There was plenty to be said both for and against the measure. The significance of Rosebery's attitude lies in the fact that since 1905 he had become a critic pure and simple of the Government. When he agreed with them he did not think it necessary to say so; they were the party in power. But when he differed, as he often did, duty obliged him to protest. He thus gave the impression of being more perpetually hostile to his Liberal friends than he actually was. He was an authentic occupant of the cross-benches, on which formerly he must always have cast a somewhat envious eye.

Yachting had become a regular custom with Rosebery since he was again master of his own time. He became owner of a fine vessel, the *Zaida*, and was elected to the Royal Yacht Squadron. Naples was one principal element in determining his choice, for Posilipo was an admirable base for any Mediterranean tour. One or other member of his family often joined in a cruise, he usually slept well at sea, and altogether life on board his yacht afforded the chief fruition of his later years now that he seldom was seen on a race-course. When England was plunged in mourning in 1901, after Rosebery had attended King Edward's first Council—"A confused and undignified ceremony; except for the new King, who was perfection"—he soon started for Rome, where his son Neil joined him at the beginning of April. The elder, Dalmeny, was now at Sandhurst, after making the most of his Eton years. Rosebery lingered longer than usual at Rome, seeing much of the diplomatic world. One evening (March 27th) he was inspired to a "purple" reflection, such as he seldom noted now:

"After dinner to the Coliseum—a band playing, then a rocket or two, then Bengal lights—these last vulgar. But before they began I was profoundly impressed with the scene—this great gaunt skeleton of time in which there once throbbed so full and tumultuous a life, where the dusty Pagan crowd thronged, as to a bull-fight, to see the torn Christians furnish sport; this imperishable monument which defies time, and watches impassively the vicissitudes of Rome, now containing a small crowd of tourists, listening to an Italian military band and waiting for the paltry fireworks, with the cold moon looking cynically down."

After the Palm Sunday celebrations they passed on to Naples and the Villa Rosebery, with a new steam launch for excursions to the town and beyond. But for a longer distance greater tonnage was needed, and they were given berths in H.M.S. *Cæsar* to Malta, saw the British Fleet in its splendour, drove four-in-

hand with Lord Charles Beresford ; Rosebery had a very interesting two hours with Admiral Fisher ; and so back to Naples in H.M.S. *Surprise*.

The Duchess of Cleveland died at Wiesbaden on May 18th, 1901, and another chapter was closed. She had shown amazing energy in travel—visiting Spain, Egypt, Constantinople (where she was decorated by the Sultan), and then India (where she went alone and unattended, by her own wish). At past eighty she had preserved all the wit and spirits of her girlhood. She and her son had always kept up a correspondence of warm affection, and in the previous year they had joined in a common sorrow, the loss of Lord Leconfield and his chivalrous friendship for his mother-in-law and brother-in-law. Some months before Rosebery had written (June 1st, 1900) :

“ I send you my most heartfelt and affectionate wishes for your health and happiness. You always have them, but never more than on your birthday.”

Rosebery now hastened to Wiesbaden. His mother had been under the care of Dr. Pagenstecher, the world-famous oculist ; in his friendly company Rosebery found “ Wiesbaden more glorious with blossom than any place I ever saw.” A simple funeral (May 24th) at Raby was the last scene.

A quiet summer followed. “ I have not spent Derby Day in London since I was at school.” Then a visit to Geneva where Neil Primrose was studying, and excursions to Coppet and Prangins. He went on to Gastein, “ lonelier than ever,” and read enormously in French, including little pocket volumes of Musset which he read out of doors. And not French books exclusively : “ Took Plutarch’s *Demosthenes* out with me. What good reading it is.” When June 21st came :

“ A glorious unspeakable day, rewarding one for the past and obliterating it. Sate out all day. I love this longest day, not least because it is the anniversary of the fall of the last Government. And to-night how I enjoyed my after-

dinner walk on the Kaiser promenade ; the dark bulk of the mountains, the pure air of heaven itself, the great black chine of the opposite mass that girds in Gastein, with a divine moon—new not perhaps the newest.”

In October Rosebery engaged in a new enterprise. He joined the Board of the Great Northern Railway. The autumn months in Scotland passed as usual.

Rosebery's Scottish activities during the first decade of the century are touched on elsewhere. But he was also busy in England from time to time. It was a compliment to him as a public orator to be asked to lead the Winchester celebration of King Alfred's Millenary (September 19th, 1901), for mediæval history had never been his playground as modern history was, and in his dedicatory speech he said :

“ In him we venerate not so much the striking actor in our history as an ideal Englishman, the perfect sovereign, the pioneer of England's greatness.”

A Service followed—“ The Cathedral stunned me by its magnificence.”

Rosebery became Chancellor of the University of London in 1902. He was the first to be elected by Convocation. It was the tradition to appoint a Liberal Chancellor. At his first Presentation Day he honoured the memory of the four personal friends who had preceded him, Lords Granville, Derby, Herschell, and Kimberley. Later in the year he formally visited the new physical laboratories, and was surrounded by a galaxy of men of science.

At the opening of the Goldsmiths' College (September 29th, 1905), one of the germs of the Imperial College of Science and Technology, Rosebery praised the munificence of the great City Company and the co-operation of the local authorities, but he was happiest in foretelling the priceless work to be done by the newer Universities with London at their head.

Two years later (May 8th, 1907) a somewhat delicate situation arose. The Chancellorship of Oxford fell vacant, and in response to a requisition

Rosebery allowed his name to be put forward, well knowing that tradition would enforce the choice of a Conservative candidate. On Presentation Day the Chancellor explained his position to a sympathetic audience: his election to Oxford was impossible and his devotion to London could not be excelled.

He opened the London Day Training College in Southampton Row, and thought that the education of examiners might be as important as that of teachers.

One pleasant educational episode fell in this period. Rosebery had always remained a pugnacious Etonian, and had never even seen Harrow. Recently a lamentable fire at Eton had cost the lives of two boys. The Head of the School at Harrow had been deputed to take a wreath to the funeral. Rosebery—now to his great pleasure a “Fellow of Eton”¹—spontaneously attended Speech Day at Harrow, and told how deeply this act had gone to the hearts of Etonians.

One further London interlude can be mentioned here. At the 10th Annual Meeting of the London Topographical Society Rosebery spoke of the fascinating subject of Whitehall Palace.

It was one of the best of his short addresses, for he was in his element in telling how the home of thirty Archbishops of York, seized by Henry VIII, the favourite palace of Stuart Kings and stained with the blood of one of them, was deserted and in the main destroyed at the close of the seventeenth century. He revelled, too, in telling of the “splendid dream” of the plan that Inigo Jones drew for James I for a palace far larger than the Escorial, far grander than the Louvre or Versailles, with its huge central court and six great side courts.

“One may look back with regret,” said Rosebery, “if it be ever worth while to look back with regret, to the opportunity lost by Barry when the new Houses of Parliament were erected. . . .

¹ This old title had recently been revived for the Governing Body of Eton.

"Had the Stuarts spent the money they squandered otherwise in realising the plan of Inigo Jones, it would have stood in mitigation of the judgment of history. The recording angel of architecture would have blotted out many of their misdeeds with a grateful tear ; and we, as we passed by the stately façade of the palace, would have said, 'They were bad Kings, but after all they left us that.' "

Oxford was not to lose Rosebery altogether, for when Cecil Rhodes died and created his famous foundation, a Trust was formed of which Rosebery was the senior member. His friendship with Rhodes was of long standing, and the two had many talks and walks together at the Durdans. When Rosebery was in office correspondence passed freely on South and East African questions. Rhodes, full of his spinal railway system northwards, was lukewarm about the Uganda railway ; but of course favoured expansion towards the Lakes. In April 1895 he wrote :

"I am getting on well, but Africa is changing, and I know there are many breakers ahead. Still, if you have personally gained all that can be personally won, I think it makes you very much stronger to do your best to carry out your fixed ideas.

"I have been touched to hear that you have been ill, but as an outsider I believe if you have patience you will win. I feel mental worry has helped your sleeplessness."

In 1899 Rhodes had sent a hundred guineas to the Methodist Million Fund, and had received cordial thanks from Mr. Robert Perks. Telling Rosebery of this letter Rhodes wrote :

"I am going to face the music. You must remember my little troubles are nothing to yours."

It was fitting that the statesman to whom the Empire meant most should be one to hold in trust the benefaction left by the greatest dreamer of Imperial dreams. A tablet was erected in the Examination Schools at Oxford to commemorate the foundation of

the Scholarships. It happened that the scholarly and eloquent President of Magdalen¹ was Vice-Chancellor. He reminded the hearers that Rosebery was the only living Oxonian Prime Minister, an historian, statesman, and orator, through whom Cecil Rhodes had been admitted to the Privy Council. Rosebery dwelt on Rhodes's devotion to Oxford, and on the way in which his last years were solaced by his inspiration of combining service to the University with his Imperial ideas. Nobody had ever been more slandered in his lifetime than Rhodes, whose life was simplicity itself. Rosebery recalled two conversations, one showing Rhodes with a strong desire for posthumous fame; the other when the hand of death was nearly on him, in a different mood—"life and fame and achievement, everything is too short." But Rosebery believed that in South Africa, in the whole Empire, and perhaps not least at Oxford his fame is still secure.

"In this ancient University his surest and noblest monument will be the career, the merits, and the reputation of the scholars whom he has summoned within these walls."

The Rhodes Trust was fortunate in securing as its first secretary Mr. Francis Wylie.² An accomplished son of Oxford, he was for a time tutor to Rosebery's sons, to their great advantage. This enabled their father to estimate the qualities which made him a valued official of the Trust long after Rosebery himself had been unable to help in its active conduct. The noble Rhodes House now stands as an embodiment of its founder's vision.

Epsom always kept a strong hold on Rosebery's affections. He liked the historical associations, not merely those of the most famous racecourse in the world, but of the town where Pepys and Nell Gwyn had visited, where fashion has thronged to the Wells, where "the bad Lord Lyttelton" had been haunted. It had a pleasant flavour of his own more reckless

¹ Mr. (afterwards Sir Herbert) Warren.

² Sir Francis Wylie resigned his post in 1930.

days, when the fascination had beguiled him into the imprudent purchase of an extra home. That house, Durdans, or The Durdans, had a chequered history. The original dwelling was believed to have been built from the materials of Henry VIII's gorgeous palace of Nonsuch, which fell into the rapacious hands of Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland, became derelict, and was pulled down. The Durdans belonged to that Earl of Berkeley whose daughter Henrietta became the heroine of a notorious family scandal. In the eighteenth century it passed to the Earl of Guilford, and was afterwards inhabited by Frederick Prince of Wales, who enjoyed the hawking for which Epsom Downs were famous. Before long the fine house was stripped and demolished. Another was being erected on the same site when it was entirely destroyed by fire in 1764. Soon a smaller building took its place, the property changed hands more than once, and ultimately belonged to Mr. Arthur Heathcote, locally known as "Squire Heathcote," an offshoot of the family of which Lord Ancaster is the head. He seems to have been something of a Squire Western, and is chiefly remembered from his ownership of the Derby winner *Amato*, singular as having run in that race and that alone. The horse is buried in the grounds of the Durdans, side by side with a favourite stag-hound, and his memory is kept green by the *Amato* Inn, just below the Durdans and a popular resort of tipsters of the humbler class. When Rosebery bought the estate it was a small affair, with a few paddocks belonging to it. As years went on he added to it considerably, and divided his stud of mares and yearlings between it and Mentmore. He also greatly improved the house and gardens, adding a delightful library and other rooms. There, too, was housed the wonderful collection of sporting pictures, headed by Stubbs' *Eclipse*, which he began to form in the days when they could be bought for comparatively little, before American taste had swept these open-air products of British art into the net that has

captured so many bigger fish. Rosebery was fond of telling how, when he was Foreign Secretary, it now and then happened that some solemn diplomatist from abroad came down on solemn business, and stared in amazement at the spectacle of the Minister surrounded by effigies of racehorses, jockeys, and fighting-cocks.¹

Certainly there could be no pleasanter parties than those at the Durdans, serious or gay. Nothing could oust his Scottish homes from his affections; but in his later years there was little to choose between them and the Durdans. He was on the pleasantest terms with his Epsom neighbours, notably Mr. and Mrs. Northey of Woodcote Place, whose family had been conspicuous there for two hundred years; and Mr. and Mrs. Aston of Woodcote Grove. Mr. Aston was a keen Liberal Leaguer, and Rosebery's frequent companion in long walks. One day—

"On the way back past Epsom Common, I saw a huge blaze! 'Tis Durdans,' I said. Aston tried to reassure me, but in vain. What an agony it was till I got home and saw that it was the lower yard on fire—fine flames they were. But what a reaction of joy and gratitude. I realised what it would be to lose my beloved nest. Thanks be to God."

Sir Rowland Blades² and his family, close by at Leatherhead, were frequent visitors and valued friends.

But Epsom was not only a *Sans-Souci* for a weary statesman. Rosebery meant to be a good townsman, and he became an active member of the Urban District Council, scrupulously attending its meetings. He also zealously supported the renovation of the two

¹ There is a parallel story of a bishop, one of the most famous scholars of his day, who received a peculiarly pompous clergyman on business. The visitor began, "I find Your Lordship in your study, immersed, no doubt, in the researches that have made your name so famous." "As a matter of fact," replied the bishop, "I was looking at the *Sporting Times*." And it was true, for one of the sons of the palace took in the pink periodical.

² Lord Mayor of London 1926-7; cr. Lord Ebbisham 1928.

churches which he and his family attended. Epsom College was founded in 1855, and soon became noted for its science teaching—when science teaching was generally kept in the background. It then became a recognised portal to the profession of medicine. Rosebery was its President, and maintained friendship with the successive headmasters, all men of mark in the educational world. He was conspicuous at the Jubilee festival in 1905. Soon afterwards his devotion to the Epsom ratepayers brought him into conflict with a still older love, the London County Council. London had to house its lunatics somewhere, and it acquired the large estate of Horton Manor, on which vast buildings began to rise. Rosebery wrote a piteous letter to *The Times* (March 4th, 1907), detailing the circumstances, and making appeal for mercy to the new Council. He quoted an earlier letter from the leading residents of Epsom to the L.C.C., of which it may be concluded he was the author. Did it not strike the Council as hard, it had then been asked, that the little community of Epsom should be selected as the dumping-ground for so great a proportion of the mental disease of the County of London? In his present letter, his blood boiled, he declared, at the injustice of the infliction, and he dwelt on the prospect of escaped lunatics penetrating into the houses of nervous residents. In fact, from time to time a few patients, happily of the milder variety, did escape; and Rosebery wrote further indignant letters to the Press. In his many walks and drives he encountered parties of these poor people oftener than his fellow-townsmen had the chance of doing; but in his protests he was certainly the mouthpiece of local sentiment. However, the mass of practical considerations prevailed; and nothing happened until the world-wide lunacy of the war distracted the ordinary existence of peace-time lunatics, as of everybody else. They were carted off to distant establishments, and Horton, for the time being, overflowed with wounded soldiers.

Rosebery was at any rate safe from strange incursions in his smaller home of Rosebery, in the hills on the Peebleshire border. Before the days of motor-cars it was something of an expedition to get to it, but during these years he spent many autumn days there, with his sons or a neighbour or two. There was a small grouse-moor, with a converted farm-house as a shooting-box; and a good stretch of coverts and low-ground shooting, with the singular variety of game in limited quantities which makes that form of sport so pleasant in Scotland. There were friendly houses within easy reach, and places of interest, like Cockpen famed in verse, and the soft beauty of Hawthornden. For a moment Rosebery contemplated considerable additions to the simple house, which he had made agreeably habitable but nothing more. Plans were prepared by a distinguished architect of Edinburgh, not on the scale of Inigo Jones and Whitehall, but such as would have turned Rosebery into a regular country house. The shifting events of his later years made its owner abandon them, not without regret.

CHAPTER XX

THE CLOSING YEARS

COMPLETE good humour reigned when, in 1907, the Prime Minister was granted the Freedom of Edinburgh. Rosebery made a point of being present, and, in the course of a brief speech, said :

“ What we recognise most in Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, besides the great qualities which have brought him to his high office, are those Scottish qualities of humour, geniality, courtesy, and if I may add the most distinctive and Scottish word of all, pawkiness, that have marked his career. Let me also say this on my own behalf, that I should have travelled far, even if I had not been near, to come to-day to pay honour to one for whom, though I may be sometimes separated on questions of public policy, I have long learned to honour and regard as a colleague in many Governments, and a friend whose regard I have never forfeited, as he has preserved mine. It is only people of little faith and thin convictions who never differ from each other on public policy. This at least we have always cherished in our public life as our guiding principle, that these differences of opinion, where they do not touch personal honour, should never in the slightest degree affect personal friendship.”

This Scottish tribute from an old friend gave particular pleasure to the Scottish Prime Minister. It was one of the last he was to enjoy, for he was struck down by illness on November 13th. He recovered slightly in the New Year, but died on April 22nd, 1908.

The succession of a Liberal League Prime Minister did not soften Rosebery towards the new Government. He recognised two bugbears—Protection and Socialism. The first seemed to have been definitely quelled ; but the second was becoming formidable. The Treasury policy, especially in its treatment of land,

seemed to him to violate the canons of Gladstonian Liberalism; and he definitely ranged himself in the opposing camp.

The Budget of 1909-10 brought his discontent to a head. Its whole story does not concern this book; but Rosebery's share in the fierce struggle must be recorded. In a letter to the Press he wrote (June 21st, 1909):

"This is not a Budget but a revolution, a social and political revolution of the first magnitude. . . . It will be carried over the heads of the people by a majority in the House of Commons without the faintest desire or attempt to ascertain the views of the people on the vast changes projected . . . there is no referendum here. A powerful Government does not, naturally, seek a general election. . . . So that the boasted freedom of our Constitution has really come to this—that the most sweeping changes may be carried out by a Ministry of great numerical backing in the House of Commons, without the nation having, or ever having had, or hoping to have, a voice in the matter before it is decided. . . . Surely the country must see that there are vast flaws in the Constitution, and that the absolute rule of a party in power differs very little from the absolute rule of an individual, which is what we used to call despotism?"

There is nothing in this letter about the merits of the financial proposals themselves. Rosebery hammered out his opinion of these in a very long address delivered (September 10th, 1909) in response to a requisition from the business community in Glasgow. It was a painful task in many respects, he said, but duty forbade him to remain absolutely silent. He proceeded to a root-and-branch condemnation of the measure, with scarcely a word of qualification. Its features, he said, were a want of adequate preparation, a violent onslaught on the ownership of land, and the creation of a general feeling of insecurity. With great skill, with few rhetorical adornments, and with complete abstention from humorous comments, he marshalled all the well-known arguments against the new principles of taxation. It was a departure, he

maintained, from the sound rule of not taking more in a single year than is necessary for the service of that year. Then, he continued,

“The most suspicious part of the Budget is that relating to land . . . the source is suspicious, because in the main it is that of our old friends of the Land Nationalisation League. . . . Mr. Lloyd George, in October 1906, said ‘Nationalisation of the Land must come, but it must come by easy stages.’ . . . The Land Nationalisation League were extremely jubilant over the Budget.”

Rosebery went on to examine the familiar contention that land should be placed in a special category for taxation. He would have none of it, saying that all the arguments were equally applicable to railway stocks. If unearned increment were taxed in the case of land, the same would soon happen to all securities.

“When did landowners become part of the criminal class ? . . . Do these taxes only touch the rich ? . . . the figures of the Budget introduced total uncertainty into an important trade ; they select one kind of property for exceptional dealing on grounds which may easily be extended to all property, and they must immediately result in a considerable increase in unemployment.”

Death duties, he went on, as introduced by Sir William Harcourt in his Government, were regarded as a sort of deferred income-tax on unearned incomes. Now earned and unearned incomes were differentiated, and the maximum figure was almost doubled. Death duties were a capital tax, popular with Chancellors of the Exchequer who spend them as income. It sounded very pleasant to tax the rich to give to the poor, but that is an operation which very soon percolates to the poor. He would ask the Government, several of whose members had served under Mr. Gladstone, with what feelings they would approach him, were he alive, with such a Budget. They would

soon find themselves on the stairs, if not in the street.

“Because in his eyes, and in my eyes, too, his humble disciple, Liberalism and Liberty were cognate terms; they were twin sisters.”

In concluding the speech he declared :

“In my opinion, the deep, subtle, insidious danger which underlies it all is the danger of Socialism. . . . I cannot help feeling that the Government is dallying with Socialism . . . how far they are advanced on that path I will not say, but on that path I, at any rate, cannot follow them an inch. I may think Tariff Reform or Protection an evil, but Socialism is the end of all, the negation of faith, of family, of property, of monarchy, of Empire.”

Such was the outline of the address, eagerly anticipated, and enthusiastically greeted by the Opposition. Two other passages must be cited, from their bearing on the subsequent fortunes of the Budget. Quite early in the speech he declared :

“It is my duty to-day to show why I believe it not to be in the best interests of the nation that this financial measure should become law.”

And before dilating on the Socialist danger he said :

“The peers should see this constantly drifting and changing Budget in a definite shape before they venture to pronounce any opinion on it. . . . I hear a great many people in easy chairs say, ‘Why trouble about the Budget when the House of Lords is sure to throw it out?’ If the House of Lords relies on the support of the people in the easy chairs, the House of Lords is not likely to do that which they expect. . . . I have come to the deliberate conclusion that the Government wishes the House of Lords to throw out the Finance Bill. It believes, I imagine, that it will be a taking cry in the country. In no other way can I explain the prodding and taunting of the House of Lords which is so considerable a feature in the speeches of some members of the Government towards the House of Lords—not all of them.”

The Finance Bill plodded its way through the House of Commons, much modified and amended, as such a colossal measure was bound to be. It reached the House of Lords on November 23rd, and received the unusual compliment of six full days' debate, before and after dinner. When the second reading was moved, Lord Lansdowne countered it with the Resolution, "That this House is not justified in giving its consent to this Bill until it has been submitted to the judgment of the country." Rosebery spoke early on the third day. He expressed his sense of the awful gravity of the situation, the most serious since 1832. On the merits of the Bill, he recurred to his Glasgow speech, and had never thought of reversing or recalling one single syllable of it. The Bill had at any rate the aspect of being both crude and vindictive. But he was not willing to link the fortunes of the Second Chamber with opposition to the Budget. If we had the Referendum it would be an occasion for its use. But he did apprehend the result of an appeal to the country on an unreformed hereditary Second Chamber, mixed up with the promises of the Budget. The House was playing for too heavy a stake on this occasion.

"I think that you are risking in your opposition to what I agree with you in thinking is an iniquitous and dangerous measure, the very existence of a Second Chamber. . . . I am sorry—with all my heart I am sorry—that I cannot give a vote against the Budget on this occasion."

Several peers commented on the speech; but it was not until the last day of the debate that Lord Curzon set himself to dissect it.

The Glasgow speech, he observed, had been the first blow, as many thought a smashing blow in the campaign. He wondered if Rosebery had quite realised the responsibility which he had assumed by the speech. He was not a recluse thinking aloud in his study, but an ex-Prime Minister speaking aloud to his countrymen. No speech in Lord Curzon's

time had anything like the instantaneous and overwhelming effect upon the people ; and when Rosebery said the future of Great Britain was being put in the melting-pot, and it was not in the best interests of the nation that the measure should become law, the average reader, particularly if he happened to be a legislator, might be pardoned for thinking that it was his duty to do what he could to prevent it. There was a sting in Curzon's conclusion, though he did not dispute the purity of Rosebery's motives :

"The impression produced on us was as though some great and famous commander had left us in the breach after he himself had taken us up to the walls and had fired the powder in the train."

Rosebery said no more in public, but he was wounded by this interpretation of his speeches. He wrote to Sir R. Perks on November 26th, 1909 :

"I see the air darkened by brick-bats, and though I foresaw it, it seems to me very absurd. If you turn to my Glasgow speech, you will see that my language was as distinct on this point as it could be. I never said privately or publicly that I could support the House of Lords in rejecting the Budget. Indeed, what I said as Prime Minister (July 19th, 1894) made that impossible, in my judgment. I should have wished to remain silent, but that was impossible."

He opened his heart again to the same trusted friend on December 5th :

"My last speech I knew must make me odious to both sides. The flesh therefore would have inclined me to silence ; but the spirit made me feel that that course would be ignominious. So I faced the music. But I scarcely anticipated that I should be taunted by the Anti-budgeteers with perfidy and cowardice (for that is what the charges amount to), bolstered up by snippets from my Glasgow speech, when the whole passage would be conclusive. This is what Curzon does, an honourable man and a friend of my own ; and I do not complain, for it is what all the professional

politicians would do. But it brings home to me once more the dirt and squalor of party politics. I am glad that you are out of them for the present, and I for ever.

"I view this situation with good humour, but it makes me feel how difficult it is for me to speak on behalf of such men, who use independent utterances for their own purposes, and stone the speaker when he differs from them on a question of policy.

"The situation is the gravest in my lifetime, but at this moment I do not see how I, distrusted and detested by both parties, can usefully intervene. Perhaps the situation may clear in this respect, but it threatens to become murkier.

"The decision will be fought at this Election : the House of Lords, the Budget, and Tariff Reform, and there will be a decisive voice on none of them. Eventually we shall, I think, as usual 'muddle through.'"

Rosebery tells his own story of this transaction. The harshest critic could only say that once more he failed to realise that his past history made it impossible for the public to regard him as an outsider bringing an independent judgment to bear on a novel situation. To the commercial audience at Glasgow he had not thought it necessary to foretell the probable reaction on the House of Lords of rejection of the Bill ; consequently his speech there was almost entirely devoted to the iniquities of the measure. Here he seemed to be in line with the regular Opposition ; and when in the House of Lords he warned them of the deeper considerations that could not be escaped, they looked on him as a backslider.

REFORM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

The well-worn subject of House of Lords reform was pushed into the foreground by the rejection of the Budget and the consequent General Election.

On December 22nd Rosebery wrote to *The Times* that in the polemics of the General Election there was danger that the reform of the House of Lords would be disregarded. The Government desired to

turn the House into a pliant phantom. On the other hand, Mr. Balfour had given no pledge of reform. "Have we not then to ask for definite declarations of policy from both sides?"

In another letter, to the *Glasgow Daily Record and Mail*, he pointed out that the situation had changed since 1894-5, when he had attacked the House of Lords. There was now a danger that a chance Socialist majority might wreck the nation by measures, nominally financial, which it would claim to exclude from any modification.

As a matter of fact, the subject had not been allowed to sleep since the Liberal Government came into power. In 1907 Lord Newton, whose drily humorous and independent speeches always gave Rosebery pleasure, introduced a Bill with extensive proposals for reforming the composition of the House. Rosebery spoke on the second day of the debate. The first day had made two things clear—that the regular Conservative Opposition preferred a renewed inquiry by a Committee rather than a Bill, and that the Liberal Government were convinced that the urgent question was not the composition of the House of Lords but its relation to the House of Commons. Rosebery unhesitatingly preferred the device of a Select Committee on the lines which he had fruitlessly advocated twenty-three years before. A Bill, he thought, had no chance of acceptance by the House of Commons, and, on the other hand, he refused to admit that all reform of the House must wait until the relations between the two Houses had been adjusted. He had come to three fundamental conclusions: first, that the mainly hereditary constitution of the House cannot logically be defended; secondly, that the thinking part of the country would prefer a House of Lords unreformed to no Second Chamber at all; and thirdly, that there can be no reform of the House except with a Conservative Government in power. The only hope was to keep, so far as possible, the party element out of the discussion.

The result was the nomination of a Committee, from which the Government stood aloof, though three Liberals, Lord Selby, the former Speaker, Lord Courtney, and Lord Ribblesdale joined it with their approval. Its principal outcome was the general acceptance of the principle that for English Peers, as for Scottish and Irish, the possession of a peerage should not *ipso facto* involve a place in Parliament.

After the General Election at the opening of the year 1910, Parliament met on February 21st. For once the King's Speech contained no programme of general legislation ; but it foreshadowed proposals to define the relations between the two Houses, and to secure to the House of Commons undivided control over finance and predominance in legislation.

After the customary speeches Rosebery rose, and having made some general observations, of course hostile to the Government, he indicated a point of difference from the Leader of the Opposition. Lord Lansdowne, in speaking of reform of the House, had not condemned an attempt to effect it, but treated it as primarily the business of the Government, who should lay proposals on the table. Rosebery thought otherwise. He maintained that there was a golden opportunity, which might not recur, for putting themselves right with the public : Unionist candidates had broken their shins against the hereditary character of the House of Lords ; the country should be allowed to judge between the plan of the House of Commons and that of the House of Lords ; more important than the House of Lords or any of its principles was the existence of a strong and efficient Second Chamber.

This debate then closed ; but three days later Rosebery gave notice of a motion. Accordingly, on March 14th, he brought up three Resolutions. The first declared the necessity of a strong and efficient Second Chamber ; the second, that this could best be obtained by the reform and reconstitution of the House of Lords ; the last, that the possession of a peerage should not of itself give the right to sit and



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THE PROBLEM PICTURE.

Lord Rosebery : " That's mine, pretty good, eh ? "

Lord Lansdowne : " H'm, I can't say I quite—— "

Lord Curzon : " I'm sure I could improve it. "

Lord Halsbury : " Take it away ! "

vote. He called attention to the postponement by the Government of a scheme of reform, while the powers of the House were to be limited at once :

“ If the proposals are not to be parallel, if they are not to be *pari passu*, the Government must know perfectly well that they will never come to fruition.”

He thought the proposal to deprive the House of all its powers and then to reconstitute it on a democratic basis a remarkable instance of an illogical proposition. He went on to describe a sham Second Chamber system as worse than that of a Single Chamber. Rosebery devoted much of his speech to an examination of the Third Resolution, and came into collision with Lord Halsbury, the standard-bearer of ancient Toryism, who later on in the debate asserted uncompromising opposition to any plan of reform that had been suggested by anybody.

The debates continued until March 22nd, punctuated by many excellent speeches, Rosebery throughout being careful to explain that these were only broad Resolutions of principle, on which a Bill could be founded later. The Third Resolution was the only one on which a division was taken (March 22nd), only 16 peers being found to follow Lord Halsbury into the lobby. The 175 who supported Rosebery belonged to both parties, and included all the Ministers present.

Rosebery had hoped to drive his nail in a little deeper when the House reassembled after the Easter recess. But on May 6th the whole nation was plunged into mourning by the King's death, and he felt that although his Resolutions were not controversial in the sense that the Government Resolutions were, their discussion ought to be postponed. It was further deferred by the appointment of the small Conference, representing both Houses, at which an attempt was made to define the lines on which their future relations should be drawn. The attempt failed, and the Conference closed early in November.

Rosebery's hands were again freed, and he urged strongly (November 15th) that his Resolutions should not be ignored in spite of Lansdowne's demand for the prompt consideration of the Government's Parliament Bill. On the very next day Lord Lansdowne formally repeated this demand, with which the Government spokesman complied. Rosebery announced that he would proceed next day with his new Resolutions. This he did, the first Resolution enacting a tripartite Chamber consisting :

A. Of hereditary peers chosen from among themselves and by the Crown ;

B. Of Lords sitting by virtue of offices and qualifications ;

C. Chosen from outside.

Rosebery defended his scheme from the charge of vagueness, and explained the absence of any provision for dealing with differences between the two Houses. Lord Curzon, however, in a long speech, attempted to dot some of the i's, declaring, for instance, that the hereditary element should not be predominant, and discussing possible methods of election. Rosebery replied at the close of a friendly debate, and this Resolution, the only one that was moved, was carried *nem. con.*

The second reading of the Parliament Bill was moved on the 21st ; and was countered by Lansdowne with a fresh set of Resolutions covering the relations between the two Houses. The debate was to be adjourned in order that these might be considered. Rosebery naturally supported this, commenting severely on the Prime Minister's speech implying that the House of Lords was under sentence of death. The Lord Chancellor, Loreburn, while admitting Rosebery's lifelong lead in this business, maintained that the House had neglected the whole question for years.

The Lansdowne Resolutions (November 23rd and 24th) for the settlement of differences by a Joint Committee, by Joint Sittings, or in the last resort by

Referendum, were discussed for two days. Rosebery spoke on the second day. His old friend John Morley, now Lord President, had appealed to him to divulge his whole plan, and repeated a witticism which years before Sir William Harcourt had thought particularly brilliant, describing Rosebery as "a dark horse in a loose box," and begging him to come out of his box. If he would produce a plan to constitute a real revising body, he would do a useful work.

In a very short reply Rosebery said that his friend's parallel about the horse was only too congenial. But nobody except the Government could lay a detailed scheme on the Table of the House.

The Resolutions were of course carried, like Rosebery's own.

Parliament was prorogued on November 28th.

So ended Rosebery's persistent and consistent campaign for Reform of the House of Lords. More than twenty years have passed, and the composition of the House remains practically as it was. The combined wisdom of two, or of three, parties in the State has not produced any modification. This may prove the hopelessness of Rosebery's task. But it does not detract from the credit due to his laborious devotion to the job he had undertaken almost as a boy.

Since death had so early claimed Hannah Rosebery, her husband had done all he could, in the spirit of one of the most gracious poems that Roman genius has bequeathed to us :

"Thou must be father and mother too :
No neck but thine
The arms of all my merry crew
Can now entwine.

"Whene'er thou kiss their tears away
Kiss too for me :
All our home's burden from today
Must fall on thee."¹

¹ I have ventured to quote Mr. S. G. Tremenheere's excellent rendering of *Propertius* iv, 11. (London, 1931.)

The four children had now grown up ; the younger daughter had married. The elder was not long in following her example : the bridegroom was Charles Grant of the Coldstream Guards, son of General Sir Robert Grant, and presumptive successor to the ancient Shropshire family of Cotes of Woodcote.

The two boys said good-bye to Eton, after happy and prosperous schooldays. One passed through Sandhurst, the other studied abroad. Their father wrote at Dalmeny :

“ Walked with the boys and read sermon with them,—for the last time as boys here with me. When they are next here Harry will be an officer and Neil an Oxford man.”

At the beginning of 1903, Dalmeny, now in the Grenadiers and a county cricketer, came of age. At Dalmeny congratulations poured in from Scottish and English public bodies. The Duke of Buccleuch proposed the toast of the evening. When Rosebery's turn came, he re-echoed for his son the hope expressed at his own coming of age by the father of one of the guests, that “ wherever his fortune or his fate may carry him he must always remember the land to which he belongs, the people among whom he was bred, his kindred, his traditions.” But he could not help *in ipsis floribus* from striking a note in a minor key. The occasion, he said, marked a milestone on the way of life ; and he raised a smile by admitting to “ something of a dowager feeling for the first time in his life.” There were similar celebrations after the move to Mentmore.

Many parents, perhaps most, when their children grow up, look longingly back to the days of the united household of which they were the central luminaries. A man in whom the sense of proprietorship was so strongly developed as it was in Rosebery is specially susceptible to such reflections. As time went on and the family scattered, his love for his children never weakened or wavered, but the memory of the holidays at Mentmore or Dalmeny remained most precious to

him. Perhaps he never experienced the positive pleasure which it is given to some to feel when they see the new generation stripped for the race and awaiting its turn. But he was all that a father-in-law could be to the wives and husbands of his sons and daughters. His affectionate regard for them was amply returned.

And there were compensations, such as a stay at Oxford with Neil. "We dined at the Bullingdon dinner in the barn. I sat next Agar-Robartes the president, with Neil next me." Thomas Robartes, a picture of energy and the joy of life, became the closest friend of the young generation at Mentmore. Later he made a definite mark in the House of Commons, before the war came to blight the unusual promise of his days. He sometimes joined the yachting expeditions, as did other friends of an older generation, somewhat younger than Rosebery's own, such as Luke White, Lord Annaly, a popular social figure and successor to his relative Lord Spencer as Master of the Pytchley—Rosebery maintained a close friendship with him and Lady Annaly. Others were Lord and Lady Arran, he a staunch supporter of the Liberal League, and Evan Charteris, who carried on the old amity between the houses of Gosford and Dalmeny and was able to discuss Scottish history and culture on even terms with his host. Throughout this period Rosebery depended much on the friendship and service of his personal private secretary, Neville Waterfield, his perpetual companion and the recipient of greater confidence than as a rule he found it easy to give to his nearest belongings.

For Rosebery the neighbourliness of the Lowlands overstepped the limits of political agreement. The Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch and their children, Lord and Lady Wemyss (he "The Brigadier" as Rosebery liked to style the veteran of the Royal Company of Archers), with the whole of the Charteris family, and Lord and Lady Elphinstone, were close friends but not political allies. The nearest great

house of all was Hopetoun. There three generations kept up close friendship with Dalmeny. The 7th Earl of Hopetoun, created Marquess of Linlithgow 1902, made an honoured name as the first Governor-General of the Australian Commonwealth. His son and successor and his wife, the daughter of Rosebery's Christ Church contemporary Sir Frederick Milner, carried on the friendly tradition to the last. On the other hand Sir Thomas¹ and Lady Carmichael were ardent supporters, as were Sir Edward² and Lady Colebrooke.

Looking northwards, the Duke³ and Duchess of Montrose were intimate friends, as were the Duke's sister, Lady Breadalbane and her husband,⁴ and the kindred families of Stirling-Maxwell and Stirling of Keir, Lord and Lady Mar and Kellie,⁵ inheritors of that great Scottish name, were also of the inner circle of Rosebery's friendship. But as has been shown by his frequent visits to Dunrobin, by far his closest intimacy was with the Duke⁶ and Duchess of Sutherland. Of the other ladies with whom he maintained cordial friendship, some have flitted through these pages; but special mention must be made of the Duchess of Abercorn,⁷ of Lady de Grey,⁸ and of Georgiana Lady Dudley.⁹

There was a long yachting cruise in the Mediterranean in the spring of 1902, with a son and a daughter, starting from Cannes to Corsica. As they approached in the evening, "there was the strong scent of the

¹ (1859-1926.) Governor of Victoria 1908-11, of Madras 1911-12, and of Bengal 1912-17. *Cr.* Lord Carmichael 1912.

² 5th Baronet. *Cr.* Lord Colebrooke 1906.

³ 5th Duke of Montrose (1852-1925). Lord Clerk Register of Scotland.

⁴ 7th Earl of Breadalbane (1851-1922); *cr.* Marquess 1885.

⁵ 12th Earl of Mar and 14th Earl of Kellie, *b.* 1865.

⁶ (1851-1913.) Succeeded as 4th Duke 1892. *m.* Lady Millicent, daughter of the 4th Earl of Rosslyn.

⁷ Lady Mary Curzon, wife of the 2nd Duke of Abercorn.

⁸ Lady Gladys Herbert, wife of the 4th Earl of Lonsdale, and secondly of Lord de Grey, afterwards 2nd Marquess of Ripon.

⁹ Daughter of Sir Thomas Moncrieffe and widow of the first Earl of Dudley.

island of which Napoleon spoke so much." At Ajaccio "the population is handsome: the males are so largely dressed in brown velveteen that one feels that some enterprising draper must have made a fortunate investment in that material." Naples sweltered in a sirocco, so Rosebery and Neil went on to Sicily, Girgente and its temples carpeted with more abundant and brilliant flowers than he had ever seen, Syracuse, back to Naples, and on to Villefranche. At Paris it was the day of elections, "as dull as a Scots Sunday in a country town." There was not much more foreign travel that year. He took Neil to Paris in August, and on to Tunis and Courmayeur. There he out-walked his son; got nearly to the end of his books, but found "*Whitaker's Almanack* a great resource." Neil also accompanied him to Balmoral for "an easy and pleasant man party," where cigars in the drawing-room betokened a revolution in the new reign.

The Adriatic coast was new ground the next year. Starting from Venice (April 1903), again with Neil as companion, he paused at Miramar, with its wonderful gardens and its tawdry relics of the hapless Emperor Maximilian; was amazed by the amphitheatre at Pola; dined with the Herbert Bismarcks at Fiume; was attracted by the churches of Zara, in spite of a bitter north-east wind—"the Venetian lions are everywhere, they should be the emblems of Great Britain"; was somewhat disappointed by the ruined palace at Spalato; but was deeply impressed by Ragusa, its suburbs and its church relics of ancient silver. To Corfu and then to Sicily and Naples, where King Edward arrived with the Mediterranean Fleet. But for this, the life at the villa was as usual. This year Gastein was the customary scene of Rosebery's August abroad.

The same pair were at Seville in the yacht for the following Easter (April 1904), with Evan Charteris as a third. Rosebery enjoyed the matchless Cathedral organ as much as ever, but after dinner he "walked

back to the yacht, while the others went to that tedious imposture the dancing." Evidently he found that repetition stales a spectacle interesting only from its strangeness. They went on to Algiers and Biserta, and for a short stay at Naples.

The summer yachting tour (August 1904) was from Holyhead to the West Coast of Scotland, picking up Evan Charteris at Oban, and along the countless lochs of the west coast.

During these years Rosebery was always reading, but rarely noted the name of a book. But he liked keeping in touch with the lettered world. I recall a dinner at Berkeley Square at which he received Acton, W. Courtney, G. Prothero, Spender, Welby, Godley, and myself. He described it—"Literary dinner at home. Very pleasant. Some stayed till 1."

His character as a writer was now fairly established :

January 23rd, 1902.—"Rowton dined with us. Long talk with him. He told me that he and Natty Rothschild had come to the conclusion that they might publish the first part of Dizzy's life, and that there was only one person they wished to write it (myself), but they feared it was impossible for me to give the time. I said 'Quite.' But it is strange to have been asked to write the authoritative lives of both Gladstone and Dizzy."

This, it will be remembered, was but a month after the Chesterfield speech, and all the political world was bubbling with rumours of Rosebery's political intentions.

Rosebery's share in the preliminaries to the General Election of January 1906 has been described above. His principal satisfaction with it was the return of Dalmeny for Midlothian by upwards of 3,000 votes. The unlucky misunderstanding with his Liberal League colleagues had in no way poisoned personal relations. Sir Edward and Lady Grey spent Christmas at the Durdans, meeting Jameson, and sedulously

"walking the course." But after Parliament met there was nothing to keep him in London. His leading comrades had joined the Government, bound up with those who were by no means his comrades. They must have their fair chance, and for the moment he was really "out of politics." A long stay abroad was the obvious consequence, and early in March he started for Paris, and remained away for nearly three months. In the first weeks his companion was the ever congenial "Peter" Wroughton. They joined the yacht at Genoa. At Leghorn :

"A pathetic sight, a whole community there to see emigrants off : slipping bottles of wine into their hands—men, women, and children. The emigrants trying to be brave, and looking their last at the old home."

At Palermo Rosebery had to say good-bye to his old friend, and a pencil note in his diary shows how painfully solitude beckoned to him :

"Much as I loved him, I was mad to be alone."

As he explored Sicily the weather was bad and he became seriously unwell. He was little better when he returned to Naples, and matters were not improved by a violent eruption of Vesuvius, which rained black ash all over the country. During the next days the mountain thundered from behind a canopy of cloud and smoke, until the cone cracked "like the end of the world," and an earthquake drove the Neapolitans into the streets. Life in the choking dust was not agreeable, until the south-west breeze freed the villa. Rosebery's cough persisted, but he hung on, and enjoyed the amazing sunsets which the cataclysm had helped to paint. King Edward and Queen Alexandra arrived, and various expeditions did not improve Rosebery's persistent cough. It grew worse ; he retired to bed with a temperature of over 103 degrees ; got up in three days with his "legs very volatile" ; gazed at Vesuvius knocked out of shape "like a

prize-fighter's nose" by the eruption, and stayed on in convalescence till late in May. He was back in England on the 28th, still much below the mark, and sleeping badly. He was not abroad again during the year, but the following spring (May 1907) found him again at Naples for three weeks, with the yacht, and with Annaly as a companion. He thought Vesuvius dwarfed, "but his glow of purple and green is more splendid than ever." He once more noted what he was reading :

"I wish I could enjoy Pascal as, say, Macaulay did. I almost wish I did not enjoy Retz so much ; but his acid flavour is so refreshing after the insipid graces and maternal flutterings of Madame de Sévigné."

They sauntered back to Marseilles in wonderful weather.

"Cleopatra on the Cydnus was not a patch on our delightful progress to-day."

In April next year (1908) he was again at the Villa Rosebery, both his sons sailing with him from Marseilles, and his younger daughter joining him at Naples. He sought peace there again in October. The weather was perfect : "nothing to record except pure enjoyment."

Italy called him again in the following spring (April 1909), but this time to Venice, crowded with strangers for a great Exhibition. He saw something of Horatio Brown, one of the Englishmen whom Italy had captured as a lifelong resident. He was for some time one of Rosebery's regular correspondents, and under his care Rosebery made acquaintance with several palaces that tourists do not see. It was all unusually pleasant, and so was Ravenna, where it appeared that the *Zaida* was the first yacht that had ever reached the ancient city.

"The population stands day and night on the quay to which we are moored, breathlessly interested, and chattering."

Neil Primrose and Lord and Lady Arran had joined him at Venice.

For once he was able to stay at the Villa Rosebery at the proper season of the year. After the Derby (June 7th), there was now nothing to keep him in London, and he sailed from Marseilles in the following week. He led his usual life through June, but out of spirits, for he had determined to give up the villa. It was a rather surprising resolution, for, as will appear directly, he was dropping some of his usual pursuits, and might well have given more time to Naples. One local change had some minor influence on him. His old school friend Rolfe, the Consul, had gone, and his capable successor was a stranger. Rolfe had looked after Rosebery and the villa as a brother might. But its owner had come to the conclusion that the time for departure had arrived. His children were amused by a ten days' visit, but none of them would have wished for the villa, even if they could have afforded its expense. He himself may have begun to fear the new Liberal theories of taxation; but if he could save by abandoning the villa, he did not wish to recoup himself by selling it. He therefore handed it over to the Foreign Office as a summer retreat for the Embassy at Rome, a gift for which, so far as I know, there is no precedent. So on June 28th, 1909, starting for the Balearic Islands, he noted in his diary :

"Left at 2.30 in yacht. Good-bye, Naples."

And in London, on November 1st :

"The Treasury Solicitor and the Notary and I finally signed away the beloved Villa at Naples. *Sic transit gloria.*"

As has been said, there was a gradual renunciation of some active pursuits. At Sandringham in 1907 he wrote :

"I must give up shooting in public. I have no legs and no arms, and my gun weighs a ton. This I suppose is my illness in the spring, and I am not young enough to recuperate. So let us make our bow gracefully."

His eyesight also was interfering with his shooting in a way which he hardly realised at the time ; and a year later, again at Sandringham :

“I am giving up shooting here this year—a pang, but probably necessary.”

But he still got plenty of enjoyment from sport at his English and Scottish homes, where, though there was plenty to shoot, he had not to lift his ton-weight gun to his shoulder four or five hundred times a day.

And the customary visits to Sandringham and Windsor continued.

A certain increase of deafness began to hamper Rosebery in listening to a speech or a play, but did not sensibly interfere with conversation ; and King Edward found him as amusing as ever, and as acute a critic of European politics. One day at Castle Rising in Norfolk :

“Strolled about with the King in the morning to the church and almshouses. The King said he likes nothing so much as seeing churches.”

Once (November 1904) there was a terrific wardrobe contretemps. Rosebery was talking to a friend at Berkeley Square at 7.5 p.m. :

“I uttered a piercing shriek. ‘What is it?’ ‘The special train for the Windsor banquet leaves at 7.30!’ Tore into breeches, &c., ran into the station as the train was moving out, jumped into a carriage with the Methuens—only to find out I was in wrong costume—I should have been in uniform. Banquet gloriously beautiful ; 150 people or so in Waterloo gallery—plate and orchids illimitable. The Queen of Portugal noble and gracious. As our King came out after dinner—‘I see you belong to the American Embassy.’”¹

Through the succeeding year Rosebery’s happy relations with the Sovereigns were unchanged. Once the Queen and the Empress Marie of Russia spent the day at Mentmore.

¹ No uniform is worn by civilians in the service of the United States.

"Very easy and pleasant. The Queen seized upon and copied a letter of Uncle Sam dropped out of my Webster's dictionary. How pleased he would have been."

In 1909 Rosebery was at Balmoral in the autumn, and at Sandringham in November for the King's Birthday. A real tragedy broke up the gaiety of the visit: Montague Guest,¹ a popular figure at club and country house, dropped dead out shooting.

"I had to propose the King's health—always difficult, but more so than usual to-night because of poor Monty's death. However, the King was pleased, and came up to thank me and say how much he had been touched."

This was to be the last visit to King Edward, and the forecast of a deeper grief.

On May 6th, 1910, Rosebery was at the Durdans, and heard in the morning how grave the King's state was:

"I spent the afternoon in deep sorrow."

From the first the new Sovereigns extended to him the same gracious friendship of which he had had many proofs while they were Prince and Princess of Wales.

The accession of King George V concerned Rosebery in two respects that must be noted. He went on a mission to Vienna to announce the new reign, carried it out with dignity, and was graciously welcomed by the Emperor Francis Joseph, who conferred on him the Order of St. Stephen of Hungary, the most distinguished that a Protestant could receive. This was accepted after some demur on the side of our Foreign Office, on the ground that a dangerous precedent would be created. Events have made this fear groundless. This was Rosebery's last official appearance.

The other event caused general surprise. He was created Earl of Midlothian, an unexpected addition

¹ (1839-1909.) M.P. 1869-74 and 1880-85. Brother of first Lord Wimborne.

to his ancient Scottish titles and his more modern Barony of the United Kingdom. The explanation was this. On two or three recent occasions Scottish territorial titles had been assumed not for ancestral or proprietary reasons, but by peers promoted on general grounds of public service. This offended Rosebery's historical sense; and he was determined to anticipate the possible capture of the Midlothian name by some gifted outsider. But he never attempted to combine it with his older title.

PARLIAMENT BILL, 1910-11

The second General Election of 1910 brought to a head the proposals for limiting the veto of the House of Lords by the Parliament Bill. Rosebery, who had fought so long for reform of the House by the modification of the hereditary principle, saw his hopes shattered. He had warned his brother peers in the spring (March 14th) that the choice lay between immediate bold reform and ultimate loss of powers. Now that the battle was engaged he declared unreservedly against the Government. He spoke at Manchester on the last day of November, asserting that the Liberal proposals amounted to the creation of a Single Chamber; that a great constitutional change was advocated with a levity which would have been impossible in the United States; that the House of Lords "with great calmness and deliberation set to work to proceed with their own reforms"; that the failure of the Conference of eight should have been followed by the assembling of a larger Conference; that the Irish contingent had prevented this from being done; that the hope expressed in the preamble of the Bill for the formation of a democratic Chamber would never be realised.

The next week (December 4th) he obeyed a requisition from citizens of Edinburgh, and repeated his denunciation of the Bill. He dotted the I on Ireland, saying that Britain had to toe the line at the dictation



LORD ROSEBERY, ABOUT 1911.

of the Irish leader. He rebutted the charge of inconsistency which Haldane had brought against him, based on his hostile attitude to the Peers in 1895, and argued with much force that it was incongruous to define relations between two Houses when the composition of one of them was unknown. The House of Commons, he proceeded, would be subject to no control but that of physical force. He then turned to the Referendum, giving qualified approval to it as a means of deciding great constitutional questions. In a second speech he described the meeting as the greatest since the Midlothian campaign in 1879, and professed himself as "desperately in earnest in this matter."

Rosebery issued a Message to the People of Scotland, beginning :

"The present Dissolution is the most wanton and reckless that the country has known," and depicting the iniquity of the Government in four more brief sentences.

When the Bill reached the House of Lords the question had narrowed itself to a single issue. Would the Bill be passed substantially unamended, or if not, would a sufficient creation of peers take place in order to carry it ?

Rosebery wrote to *The Times* (July 26th, 1911) deprecating insistence on amendments moved by the "die-hard" Conservative Peers, which might mitigate the operation of the measure, but would not prevent it from being destructive of the existing Second Chamber without replacing it by anything. To protest as strongly as possible was the only course open to them.

When the two feverish nights of debate came on and the critical division was called (August 11th), on the question of insistence on the Lords' amendments, Rosebery rose and said :

"I am going to make the last, the shortest, and perhaps the most painful speech of my life."

He had never supported the amendments, he went on, but he could not conceive a more painful position than having to vote apparently in favour of a Bill which was abhorrent to him. But he had in his letter to the Press urged the Peers to abstain from voting; and as things were, it was his duty to follow the Government into the Division Lobby.

In the critical division only 243 peers voted, most Unionists abstaining. The Government won by 17.

Rosebery's attitude provoked some comments, on the lines of those which flamed out when the Budget of 1909-10 was rejected. One fell from Lord Selborne in the debate, and was answered by Rosebery in *The Times* :

"I cannot but think," [he wrote,] "that the position would be rendered even more intolerable by the introduction of hundreds of peers. . . . I should, of course, have preferred to abstain. But I should never have forgiven myself if the creation of a brigade of peers had taken place when my vote might have averted it."

His old Christ Church ally, the Duke of Northumberland, replied, by a letter to the same journal, that Rosebery by his own showing had *pro tanto* made himself responsible for the House of Lords being a sham for all effective purposes, and so his countrymen would be apt to hold him.

In his rejoinder Rosebery made an admission which he naturally had not let drop before—that the "subordinate and limited capacity for delay might under some circumstances be of some importance."

If the large creation of peers had taken place the House would have been "deprived of even this meagre resource."

By old custom a Protest Book is kept in the House of Lords, but it is not often adorned with signatures. Rosebery drew up and signed a solemn Protest against the Parliament Bill. Four bishops, and ten lay peers, mostly not of conspicuous distinction, appended their signatures.

Thus closed Rosebery's active share in the proceedings of the House of Lords.

Rosebery was casting politics to the winds at an age that for some men has marked the noontide of their public life. At sixty-three Gladstone was conducting his great administration of 1868-74; at sixty-three Disraeli had just "dished the Whigs" with his fine conjuring trick of Parliamentary reform. But Rosebery at any rate handed on the torch which he did not care himself to keep alight. Neil Primrose was elected for the Wisbech Division in January 1910. His father did not allow his disgust with politics to cool his other enthusiasms. At the Old Edinburgh Club he made a delightful speech on one of his favourite subjects, the many-coloured past of the city; he impressed on a London audience the charm of Harris tweeds and their peat reek; he gave the members of the Eton Society at their banquet (July 1911) historical and personal reminiscences of "Pop"; and he delivered (September 1911) at St. Andrews the Rectorial Address which is separately noted.

At the opening of the Mitchell Library in Glasgow he praised Mr. Carnegie for his endowment of a number of district libraries radiating the light and warmth of the central institution, and lamented the absence of a Scottish National Library; and he celebrated the memory of William Rogers—"the most true and broad-minded Christian I have ever known"—at the opening of the Library at Bishopsgate. There he made a confession of faith:

"There is no excuse for any man who has not his own private collection of books, and I appeal to every person in this assembly to say whether his own little shelf of books, even if it be merely a shelf, is not infinitely dearer to him than the whole collection of the British Museum."

The Advocates' Library in Edinburgh belonged to the Scottish Bar. For years Rosebery urged the creation of a National Library of which this was the obvious nucleus. On one occasion he urged it as the

appropriate memorial of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. The project found favour, but was checked by the Great War, like so many others. It matured in 1922, when an appeal was issued signed by the Lord Provosts, the principals of the four Universities, and some representative Scots, headed by Rosebery. Sir Alexander Grant came forward with £100,000, and in 1925 a Bill passed through Parliament. Rosebery gave £5,000 for the Manuscript Department, and in 1927 made the presentation described in the Report of that year :

" In July 1927 Lord Rosebery presented to the National Library of Scotland his collection of Scottish books at Barnbogle Castle, and they were received in November. The collection was in three sections :

" 1. Pamphlets. 120 volumes and over 2,000 single pamphlets all finely bound, published mainly between 1585 and 1903. Particularly original pamphlets dealing with the religious troubles of the 17th century, the Darien scheme, the Union, and Jacobitism.

" 2. Early printed and rare books, including a series of broadsides and proclamations. Of the 700 items in this section many are unique.

" 3. Books relating to Mary Queen of Scots. 300 volumes, the largest collection known."

He was again to the front (December 1911) at the meeting of the Scottish History Society, speaking of the interest of old household records. One of the speakers remarked that he had acquired a new reputation as a formidable, drastic, and one might almost say incendiary critic of books.

In the following year he returned to his old topic of Scottish education, reverting to his lively contest with the Duke of Argyll over Lord Young's Act of forty years back. He wondered whether better men had been produced under the old system than before.

" It was an education of poverty and oatmeal and the classics, but on the whole it did not turn out bad men. And now we are rearing a generation on tea and football—

spectators of football. The success of the Scottish nation has always been based on character, and if the schools of the country fail to produce the character they did in old times, they have something yet wanting in their sphere of operations."

These were questions not unnatural from one who saw little to cheer him in the vista of the future. In two-and-a-half years the youth of Scotland was ready with its answer.

What that answer might have to be was the subject of Rosebery's address at Glasgow when he opened the University O.T.C. headquarters. Haldane had lately made a speech of some depression on the condition of the Territorial Army, and Lord Roberts was pressing for universal military training. Rosebery told his hearers that for good or evil we were now embraced in the middle of the Continental system. We had certain vague liabilities—he would rather they were definite alliances—which might lead us into a war greater than any since the fall of Napoleon. We must be prepared at the proper time to make good that liability.

He spoke to the Midlothian Boy Scouts (July 21st) with no warlike note; and of a battle long ago when in June 1913 a memorial was unveiled at Selkirk of a fine local tradition concerning Flodden Field. The tragic tale was one for Rosebery's happiest eloquence, and he did not omit to point a moral for the twentieth century. The King of Scots had involved the honour and safety of every man over whom he reigned. "That moral is not dead yet . . . let us at least take this lesson to heart, to be vigilant as to the wars in which we engage, and hold our statesmen responsible for their part."

At the beginning of 1914 Rosebery underwent an operation of some severity, but he recovered quickly, and in June was able, at a London County Council meeting, to compliment Sir John Benn on his new dignity, and to protest against the new duty thrust upon the Council as education authority.

He also was at Glasgow for a memorial to Lord

Lister, and he gave away prizes at Epsom College, where Mr. Smith-Pearse resigned the headmastership after twenty-five years' service.

Then came the outbreak of war. Rosebery, as has been seen, deprecated the policy which brought us directly into the Continental system; but he never, in public or private, let fall a word of blame for our entrance into the struggle.

He made a series of speeches in Scotland. We first came in for Peace—he said at Broxburn—for which Sir Edward Grey strove, and for Honour, because we had guaranteed the independence of Belgium. At a great gathering in Edinburgh (September 18th), Asquith made a stirring speech, and Rosebery, dragged forward though unwilling, said that the war must be fought out to the bitter end, with no patched-up truce. He spoke again at Juniper Green; at the Scottish Corporation in London (November 30th), where he was flanked by two Scottish colleagues, Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Lord Kinnaird, each of whom had lost his eldest son; and at a vast Glasgow call to arms (December 9th). He read to a hushed audience the news of the Falkland Islands engagement, and the whole crowd rose cheering to its feet. Other speeches followed—to railway workers at Edinburgh, where the stupidity of war was his main theme, and at Dalkeith, where he celebrated the prowess of the Royal Scots. The call for recruits was becoming urgent, and at Edinburgh (December 31st, 1915) Rosebery pleaded earnestly for Bantam battalions, having discovered a pamphlet of 1733, styled "The Humble Remonstrance of the Five Foot Hughians," against a standard of height for the Army. He wrote to his old American friend Chauncey Depew:

August 28th, 1917.

"MY DEAR DEPEW,

"Your valued volume has reached me safely, as racy as ever, and I am reading it with keen enjoyment. I need not say that I began with the 'Art of public speaking,' from which I derived much pleasure, and should have obtained profit,

were I going to make any more speeches. I am a full decade younger than you in years and a full decade older in fact.

"Well, we are in the war up to our necks together, heart in heart and hand in hand. If the war makes our two nations brothers in fact and sympathy for all time to come it will almost be worth what it has cost. By Jove, Uncle Sam is shelling out his dollars! So are we our pounds sterling. I hope rather than think that all the security is good in both cases.

"I am a shy prophet, but have arrived at a conviction that the Huns are not prepared to face a fourth winter of war. But I am appalled at the thoughts of the peace congress, when all Europe will be grabbing for all it is worth, irrespective of the exertions or the feelings of the other allies.

"It is heartbreaking to think that had Russia played up the war might well have been over by now. And we all congratulate Russia on becoming a Red anarchical Republic and a bloody chaos—perforce no doubt, but I would as soon congratulate a man on having the smallpox.

"I hope you are as young as ever and as well as I wish you; and that this letter may escape a U boat.

"Y. sincerely, "AR."

At this distance of time, when international hatreds are silenced, if not all dead, it would be an ill deed to reproduce the denunciations of German statesmen and German methods of warfare profusely scattered through his speeches, as through most others of those years. Through 1915, 1916, and 1917 this note inevitably sounded louder; and when the *Lusitania* was sunk Rosebery wrote to *The Times* in terms of concentrated bitterness. Almost at the same time, at London University, he offered sympathy to the Vice-Chancellor, whose only son had fallen.

"Well, we shall have losses and we shall meet them. We shall have gaps in the ranks, and we shall fill them up, whether in the University or out of it."

His own home was not to escape. Reginald Wyndham,¹ as popular in the Life Guards as with the Belvoir Hounds, fell in November 1914. Dalmeny,

¹ William Reginald (1876-1914), second son of 2nd Lord Leconfield.

who had left the Guards soon after his marriage in 1909, rejoined the Army, and in due course became Military Secretary to General Allenby. Neil Primrose, after some service in France, became Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury, and a Privy Councillor. He married in 1915 Victoria Stanley, the only daughter of the 17th Lord Derby. He was not content with the prizes of the political arena when his friends were risking their lives abroad, so he rejoined the Bucks Yeomanry, did excellent service in Egypt, and met a soldier's end at Gaza in Palestine in November 1917. He was buried there, and Memorial Services were held in England and Scotland. Rosebery wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury :

November 29th, 1917.

"MY DEAR ARCHBISHOP,

"I thank you warmly for your kind words, and for giving your blessing to the service on Monday.

"I cannot complain. I had enjoyed all Neil's life and could not have enjoyed much more. Indeed, I never expected to see him again. The bitterness of death was almost over when I parted with him. It is the poor little widow who is to be pitied.

"Once more accept my gratitude for this last proof of your true friendship.

"Very sincerely yours, "AR."

This stunning calamity, added to the daily and nightly strain of wartime, plunged Rosebery into an old age which nature, left to herself, would have deferred. Circumstances had enabled Neil to be the most frequent companion of his father's travel abroad, and the understanding between the two was perfect. Neil's popularity in the House of Commons was unbounded, he was much favoured by Mr. Lloyd George, and struck up a close friendship with Mr. Timothy Healy. He spoke well, with modest coolness, and something of his father's charm of expression. Rosebery, curiously enough, used to doubt whether Neil would have acquired that faculty of clear judg-

ment in public life which only experience can give. It can simply be said that many tried men, of different parties, foretold a very brilliant future for him. One episode must be mentioned, touching both father and son. When the second Coalition Government was formed in December 1916 the new Prime Minister naturally desired to strengthen his administration to the utmost. Rosebery was offered a high post not involving departmental labour. One argument was subtly pressed—that acceptance would help Neil in his career. This Rosebery by no means credited; he had several reasons for declining the offer, and declined it was. Had he been able to admit the plea he would certainly have accepted, at any cost to himself. Indeed, there was no willingness anywhere to admit failure of his powers. When, in June 1916, Lord Kitchener went down in the *Hampshire* to find his “vast and wandering grave,” Rosebery was asked by the family to write the great soldier’s Life, but thought it impossible to agree.

Through 1916 and 1917 he had carried on a series of war speeches, principally in Scotland, lauding the extent of overseas patriotism, smiling at the Ford peace-ship, urging drastic national retrenchment, and proclaiming confidence in final victory. Once his burning indignation goaded him to write to *The Times* calling for reprisals in kind directed against the authors of Zeppelin raids and the destruction of unoffending civilians. This earned him sharp reproof from two opposite quarters—from Sir Evelyn Wood, who described himself as “the oldest midshipman, Field-Marshal, and student of war,” and quoted Marshal Marmont’s saying, “*les représailles sont toujours inutiles*”; and from Professor Sanday of Oxford, who protested that we should be beaten at the game of driving up the standard of ruthlessness in war. Rosebery replied that reprisal is a choice among evils, but might be the least of them. After the blow had fallen he did not slacken in his public work. There were many other ruined homes of rich

and poor ; and in the terrible stress of 1918 he felt he must work with the rest. Just as the sky was clearing for the nation he was struck down. He was busy in Scotland, with Rosebery as his headquarters, for Dalmeny had been handed over for a war hospital. He also occupied a small house in Edinburgh as a *point d'appui*. His younger daughter was his companion at Rosebery, and after a busy day he collapsed and lost consciousness from the circulation of an embolism, which produced an almost paralytic effect. He was removed to Edinburgh, under the care of Dr. Rainy, the eminent son of an eminent father, and slowly recovered strength. But there were intervals of grave anxiety. He was sometimes delirious ; and his sister and daughter recall the night of November 11th, when he was lying unconscious. The Edinburgh crowd filled Randolph Crescent, calling for a speech from their beloved orator on the great occasion.

One of his first impulses was to ask for Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. He wished to see what in his address at Lichfield he had called the most striking of all Johnson's letters. His own words of it had been these :

"When the shadow was finally on him, he was able to recognise that what was coming was divine, an angel, though formidable and obscure ; and so he passed with serene composure beyond mankind."

But he himself was to wait for many weary years before the shadow came close. It would be as painful to read as to write in these pages their detailed story.

He rallied considerably in some respects, and though even at first he moved with difficulty, and eyesight and hearing became feebler, he was able in a degree to enjoy books, and far more the company of old friends. Some of these had gone. Lord Rothschild, a staunch friend and the head of Hannah Rosebery's family, died in 1915 ; his brother Leopold—whose son Evelyn, a gallant and gentle figure, fell when Neil Primrose did—in May 1917.



BARNBOUGLE.



ROSEBERY HOUSE, GOREBRIDGE.

Rosebery wrote of Leopold in terms which all who knew him would re-echo :

“ I know of no death of a private individual which will be followed by more general sorrow, for all his life he was encompassed by love and gratitude, the universal tribute to his great heart.”

His brother-in-law Arthur Sassoon, shrewd, hospitable, and genial, also a valued friend, had died some time before. “ Peter ” Wroughton too had gone. Rosebery had drawn a fine portrait of him :

“ One of the best and noblest Christian gentlemen. I have known and loved him for 44 years, and never knew him fail for a moment or descend a degree below his high level. He was the most natural man I ever knew, and always revealing a nature superior to others, but quite unconscious in his simplicity of what a splendid fellow he was.”

Luis de Soveral, so long Portuguese Minister in London, died in 1922 after a long and painful illness. Rosebery wrote to King Manuel, who had lost the most faithful of servants and friends :

DALMENY HOUSE, EDINBURGH, *October 7th, 1922.*

“ SIRE,

“ I hope Your Majesty will excuse my dictating this letter, but I can scarcely write with my own hand, and then only in pencil. I cannot refrain from intruding on you with regard to the death of our dear friend Soveral. No Sovereign ever had a truer servant or friend than Your Majesty had in him, and I feel most deeply for your loss, which is exceptional. To all of us he was the most charming of companions and the truest of friends. Indeed, I doubt if any death since that of King Edward will leave so large a gap in society. He was, moreover, a consummate diplomatist, perhaps the best in my circle of knowledge.

“ I trust that Your Majesty will be able to bear up under this heavy affliction, and remain,

“ Your Majesty’s devoted servant,

“ ROSEBERY.”

But through the years of the war, and after Rosebery's illness, a band of loyal friends, old and young, did what they could for him.

It has been a faithfully observed tradition that nobody who has loyally served the Royal Family, or has won the confidence of any of its members, is ever forgotten or neglected in days of adversity. Rosebery, strictly speaking, had only served Queen Victoria; but he was honoured by the friendship and trust of four generations of the Royal House. So now that he was disabled the King and Queen often paid gracious visits to him who could no longer be their guest. Queen Alexandra and Princess Victoria and others of the Royal Family never allowed him to think himself forgotten.

From the political world Asquith, John Morley, and Haldane, with their refreshingly diverse minds, were often with him; Lord and Lady Lansdowne, mourning a bereavement like his, not less often. Wemyss Reid, sagacious observer and loyal friend, had died too early; but Alfred Spender, equally trusted and equally informed in public affairs, never omitted to keep Rosebery abreast of the world's news. Nobody was more affectionately attentive than Sir George Murray, who had become the most conspicuous pillar of the Civil Service, and who enjoyed Rosebery's personal confidence to an extent to which no one else had attained since the death of Edward Hamilton.

During these agitated years, perhaps his greatest stand-by was Frederic Harrison. He and Rosebery had first made friends on the London County Council in 1889, and the intimacy grew until circumstances made it closer still. There is nothing like a "cure" for cementing friendships, and at Whitsuntide in 1915 the two passed three weeks together at Bath. Motor-ing was still permitted, and they explored the beauties of Bradford-on-Avon and Castle Combe, of Longleat and Bowood. After this, correspondence became regular. Rosebery—who did not think very much of the Government that was driven to declare war in

1914, or of its successor the first Coalition, and was suspicious of the second Coalition, though on the whole he welcomed its formation—was glad to open his mind to a deep political thinker like Frederic Harrison, detached like himself from any party allegiance. After his illness he dictated frequent short notes to Harrison, starting two months after the attack, and continuing without intermission till 1922. They also met often, and their common friendship with John Morley was another link. When they were apart, Rosebery was perpetually on the look-out for Harrison's delightful replies.

Sir George Trevelyan, a still older friend, was another steady correspondent of these years. They had long written to each other about each other's books, and other people's books. Rosebery's letter of July 13th, 1911, about Macaulay, has been quoted above, and he welcomed Trevelyan's praise of his *Early Life of Chatham* and of his little brochure on *The Love Episode of William Pitt*. After Rosebery's attack the interchange went freely on. In one dictated letter he wished that Lord Brougham, much as he disliked him, could reappear "to deliver one of his huge seven-hour speeches crushing the Treaty of Versailles in gross and in detail. There is no one capable of doing it now. He might have done it, and I could have forgiven him much." But most of the notes were on books, the last in 1927, a cutting dismissal of three recently published volumes of memoirs as "arrant rubbish."

These friends belonged to the attenuated band of Rosebery's "playfellows"—to use a phrase of which my father was fond. But the younger contingent were equally faithful. Baron Edmond de Rothschild's son James had come to live in England, and had made the choicest of happy marriages here. He was Neil's closest friend; and he and his wife stepped into the position of much-liked nephew and niece at Berkeley Square and the Durdans. Annaly, Lord and Lady Arran, and Evan Charteris were assiduous

visitors; John Buchan often came and often wrote; Ronald Ferguson remained an unbreakable pillar of support and friendship. Count Albert Mensdorff, the popular and hospitable Austrian Ambassador of happier days, was able to return as a frequent guest, always received with pleasure.

Hew Dalrymple, younger son of the Lord Stair whose name occurs earlier in these pages, was a most regular and welcome visitor. The two had become more and more intimate; and when Rosebery was no longer active, Dalrymple, with his close knowledge of every phase of Edinburgh life, social, artistic, and literary, and of Scottish life generally, brought the fresh air of the Lothians into the solitary house as scarcely any other could.

During these lingering years Rosebery's three remaining children did what was possible to ease his burden, as did his sisters. Lady Leconfield, in particular, was able to devote many hours to him, to his great comfort. Most of all, there was the solace of his half-dozen grandchildren. One year some of them enjoyed the moorland air of Toxside, the Rosebery shooting-lodge, when he visited them most days. The spring of 1922 brought a new sorrow to his home. His younger daughter's only son, Jack Madeley, a boy singularly perfect in character and in bearing, died after a wearing illness on the last day of March. For us, his parents, it was the tale told in the grave unadorned lines of Callimachus:

*Δωδέκετ' ἄνδ' ὅν πᾶσι . . .
 . . . τὴν πολλὴν ἐλπίδα . . .;*

for his grandfather, it shut out much of such sunshine as was left. He wrote to Frederic Harrison:

April 9th, 1922.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Many thanks for your kind note. The blow is indeed a heavy one; heaviest of course for my daughter and son-in-law, but scarcely less heavy for me who adored the child."

Still, a precious treasure was left to him in Ruth Primrose, Neil's only child, fated soon to be motherless as well. She spent much time with her grandfather at the Durdans—a fairy presence brightening gloomy days. And the other grandchildren helped from time to time to make the house less silent. Its owner's reserve made him unwilling to see new faces. So that some of those who were pressing to the front on the political field, and would gladly have made their bow to a Prime Minister of twenty-five years back, never had the chance of seeing him. Infirmities increased, but he was able to enjoy drives over the downs and by the copses where, in past years, he had waited on many May nights for the song of the nightingale. By the happiest fortune, two personal servants¹ of long standing remained to tend him with such understanding and devotion as earned the gratitude of the whole family.

The end came in the early morning of May 21st, 1929. He had always prepared himself for the passage to another world. One of his last farewells to this was to ask for the music of his Eton tutor's famous "Boating Song." Its lilt was one of the last sounds to reach his ears.

He was buried in the little church at Dalmeny, a noble relic of the Middle Ages. Earlier in the day there was a service at St. Giles' Cathedral. The Duke of York and many of Rosebery's brother Knights of the Thistle were there, and Dr. Warr² pronounced a fine eulogy on—

"the most representative Scotsman of his times, raised to an unchallenged supremacy in this people's affection; for two generations he reigned among us as the recognised spokesman of our brave and rugged land, the alert and jealous guardian of its traditions, the indomitable champion of its interests. . . . In death he comes back to his own people."

¹ His valet William Titley, who was in his service for forty-five years, from 1884; and Joseph Liddle, an admirable butler. Both of them were valued friends.

² The Very Rev. Charles Warr, Dean of the Order of the Thistle.

These words went straight to the heart of everybody in the church, for they were exactly what Rosebery himself would have wished said.

CONCLUSION (POLITICAL CAREER)

Several biographies of contemporary statesmen include estimates of Rosebery's character and gifts, in their bearing on the career of the hero of each memoir. A reader from a far land would derive the impression of a man of exceptional ability and personal charm ; an eloquent speaker with a theatrical tinge ; but wayward in opinion, easily swayed by prejudice, somewhat deficient in moral courage, not too industrious, and enjoying too many sides of life to take any of them quite seriously.

I hope that in some material respects this study has served to correct this impression. In the first place, I have tried to show that, far from taking life easily, he erred from time to time by being too much in earnest about too many things. The statesman of the Second Empire, best remembered from his luckless profession that he entered on war with *un cœur léger*, years afterwards assured an incredulous world that the phrase really meant "an unburdened conscience." Rosebery's story tells how he never undertook any enterprise with a light heart ; but how conscience perpetually troubled his search for the path of duty. He was, indeed, something of a political Hamlet—

"thinking too precisely on the event" ;

but nobody save Hamlet himself called Hamlet a coward. Rosebery was not spared the imputation. Mr. Timothy Healy, for instance, once declared that Lord Rosebery was not a man to go tiger-hunting with. If he thought that timidity was the reason, he was altogether wrong. But there are people who do not go tiger-hunting, not because they dread the tiger, but because they are afraid of looking foolish if they

come back without the skin. There Healy would have been nearer the mark. Rosebery himself in his last days wrote on a half-sheet of paper that from the first his main fault had been Pride. One sees what he meant ; but after all, pride is one of the richer virtues, and goes happily in the yoke with humility, of which it is the near kinsman. It might have been safer to fix on self-consciousness as his bane. He found it hardly possible to get outside his own personality, to look at himself as one of the outside crowd might ; or to look at contemporary movements without wondering whether he ought, or ought not, to take a part in them.

It was this that made almost pathetic his reiterated declarations that he was " out of politics " after 1896. In the years of his retirement he jotted down many passing thoughts about public men—including himself : here is one :

" The secret of my life, which seems to me sufficiently obvious, is that I always detested politics. I had been landed in them accidentally by the Midlothian Election, which was nothing but a chivalrous adventure. When I found myself in this evil-smelling bog I was always trying to extricate myself.

" That is the secret of what people used to call my lost opportunities, and so forth. If you will look over my life you will see that it is quite obvious. But nothing is so obvious as the thing which one does not wish to see."

Again, he wrote at greater length :

" I saw in some book the other day that I was described as a failure, and this led me into a train of thought which whirled me from myself. But let me at once say that according to the usual apprehension of the word the description is sufficiently accurate. What ! a man who has been more or less in public life for a quarter of a century, who has been Foreign Secretary and First Minister, but who has never enjoyed an instant in power, and has now been long in seclusion without a follower and almost forgotten, what can be a greater failure ? "

He goes on to examine examples of failure, according to the standards of the world. The greatest, as he remembers from a sermon of Professor Drummond's, the career of Christ. But leaving this sublime example—no parallel but a striking illustration—even such renunciations as those of Charles V and Philip V are not the cases on which he would chiefly rely. The just conclusion, he thinks, is this :

“ We must realise a man's conception of life before condemning his life as a failure.

“ Failure is a term easily and often wrongly applied to a career because people do not understand what was aimed at, and judge it by their own objects. But it is impossible to say that a life is a failure without knowing its aim. The ordinary aims are easily realised : honours, power, wealth, fame, social distinction.

“ But the wise man, I think, does not consider these as the best purpose of life. What he wishes to achieve is happiness in the large sense of the word, a well-ordered life of work, friendship, family affection and, if possible, religious faith ; congenial work, a healthy existence, pleasant relations of family and friendship, and reverent loyalty to God. These objects constitute the ambitions of the wise.”

Those who read this book must judge how far Rosebery had in fact realised this practical and not ignoble philosophy of life. On the political side Mr. George Trevelyan draws a striking parallel between him and the Duke of Shrewsbury, so conspicuous at the junction of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Our vivid historian could have added that the six years that Shrewsbury spent at Rome might well have been copied by Rosebery with six years at Naples, but for his thought for his children.¹

¹ “ The character and career of Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury, bear some resemblance to those of Lord Rosebery two centuries later. A cultured, super-sensitive nobleman, self-indulgent but no libertine, a wit in whose brilliant but weighty conversation everyone delighted, he was known to all ranks and both sexes as ‘ The King of Hearts,’ ‘ The only man the Whigs and Tories both spoke well of.’ Called upon to lead a party, he saw too clearly the faults of both parties.”—*Blenheim* (1980), p. 201.”

The curious might also hit on points of similarity with a later statesman, Charles Earl Grey, the hero of the Reform Bill, as portrayed by Professor Carless Davis. But Grey would never have tackled the County Council as Rosebery did.¹

In 1895 Mr. Gladstone summed up Rosebery's character :

" I can say three things of him :

" 1. He is one of the very ablest men I have known.

" 2. He is of the highest honour and probity.

" 3. I do not know whether he really has common sense."

The veteran leader, it will be noted, did not fall into the common error of doubting Rosebery's serious purpose. Nor did he mistrust Rosebery for being one of the epigrammatic, who, as John Morley observes in his *Rousseau*, " have by no means a monopoly of shallow thinking." But doubtless many people besides Queen Victoria were made uneasy by his flashes of humour and wit. None would have applied to him the whole of Pope's flagellation of Wharton ; but not a few may have quoted against him :

" Though wondering senates hung on all he spoke,
The club must hail him master of the joke.
Shall parts so various aim at nothing new ?
He'd shine a Tully and a Wilmot too."

¹ " He loved seclusion for its own sake. ' How I long,' he wrote as a young man, ' to return to Tacitus and our own comfortable fire.'

" Charles was in fact by temperament unfitted for the daily round. He hated the business of pelting Ministers with small charges and innuendoes wrapped up in small questions. He hated still more the sepulchral atmosphere of the House of Lords. When he was in the Commons he loved to sally forth from Howick, like another Chatham, for an operation of war ; to defend the liberties of British subjects, or the rights of oppressed peoples ; to expatiate on the first principles of the constitution or of international law. On such a subject he was graceful, incisive, even eloquent, his gestures and his delivery were consummate . . . the opinion of his Whig admirers was tersely summarised by Mr. Creevey, ' There is nothing approaching this damned fellow in the Kingdom when he mounts his best horse. . . .'

" Burdett, though a dull man, put his finger on a deep-seated defect : ' Lord Grey is always thinking of himself and of his failures in life.' . . ."—*The Age of Grey and Peel*, pp. 201-3. (Clarendon Press, 1929.)

This is ill-natured, but I have heard a kinder lover of Pope, asked if he had seen Rosebery, cite with a laugh the still more famous couplet about Walpole :

“Seen him I have, but in his happier hour
Of social pleasure, ill-exchanged for power”—

the power which Rosebery truly said he never possessed, even as Prime Minister.

Every treatise on oratory tells how evanescent is the orator's art. Nobody reads old speeches ; they bloomed for a day, and in the evening they were cut down, dried up, and withered. Yet the names of the great orators stand out as sharply as any on the roll of fame. Rosebery's place on that roll is assured. His successor as President of the Scottish History Society, Mr. John Buchan, acutely pointed out that Rosebery, unlike some orators who were also writers, showed rare skill in discriminating between the demands of the ear and the eye—the spoken and the written word. Enough has been said of Rosebery's polished prose ; but his speeches require a sentence or two of notice. His oratory was sometimes considered too theatrical. Perhaps the utterances that have moved the world most deeply have been of another type. Bright denouncing the Crimean war, Lincoln at Gettysburg, in no way bring the stage to mind. But much of the noblest oratory has been histrionic. Cicero uses the phrase “a great orator, and so to speak a great tragedian.”¹ The majestic French preachers of the seventeenth century, Chatham, Sheridan, Grattan, even Burke on occasion seemed to be pacing the boards rather than standing firm on the rostra. In one of those Dialogues of the Dead which for eighteen hundred years have attracted imaginative writers, Fénelon, himself a master, conceives a conversation between Demosthenes and Cicero.² The

¹ *Brutus*, 205.

² “Tu occupais l'assemblée de toi-même ; et moi je ne l'occupais, je ne l'occupais jamais, que de l'affaire dont je parlais. . . . Tu as été un orateur parfait quand tu as été, comme moi, simple, grave, austère, sans

Greek explains to his Roman follower the superiority claimed by the unconscious orator, whose personality is swallowed up by concern for his subject. Cicero, he says, is never the perfect orator when he is only Cicero, gifted with wit, and art, and turn of phrase, but not the austere and apparently artless Demosthenes.

On this showing Rosebery was more of a Cicero than a Demosthenes, and even so not to be altogether despised as an orator. In truth, nobody who ever heard one of Rosebery's great platform speeches can forget the experience. The earnestness, the humour, the inflexions of voice, most of all, perhaps, the answering thrill running through the audience like an electric current, must remain a clear memory even to those who have listened to all the best speakers on platform or in pulpit of the last fifty years. In the House of Lords, it seemed to me, he never reached the same level. The gifts and graces were all there ; but the touch of theatricality was more obvious to that chill audience, and the atmosphere was visibly depressing to the speaker. On minor occasions, when a tart reply was needed, or when a matter of policy had to be discussed or explained, Rosebery showed, in the House as elsewhere, the easy mastery that everybody expected from him.

Few outside his home circle knew how religiously-minded Rosebery was. Without ever attaching himself to any one school of thought in the Church, or to one category of observances, he was disappointed when circumstances kept him away from Sunday service. He was a regular communicant of the Church of England ; but in Scotland he most often attended Kirk, and in Roman Catholic countries often went to Mass. It was a custom with him, when they were unable to go to church, to read prayers and a sermon

art apparent, en un mot quand tu as été Démosthénique ; mais lorsqu'on a senti en tes discours l'esprit, le tour et l'art, alors tu n'étais que Cicéron, t'éloignant de la perfection autant que tu t'éloignais de mon caractère" (*Dialogues des Morts*).

to his children from their quite early years, the sermon being eclectically picked from Chalmers, or Newman, or from some other favourite. Rosebery enjoyed many friendships with churchmen—most of all with wise old William Rogers from early days; in later days most with Randall Davidson, whose steady and unquestioned progress to the highest place he took as a matter of course. There was a near local connection: Davidson's Mains, the cradle of the Archbishop's family, is close to Dalmeny. His balanced judgment and tolerant sympathy which never sank to compromise between right and wrong, represented for Rosebery the sound ecclesiastical temper in a world where the Christian ideal is in peril of being obscured by the dust of warring faiths. During his crippled years no friendship, and no ministrations, made him happier than did those of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

THE DURDANS, EPSOM, *March 21st, 1922.*

"MY DEAR LORD ARCHBISHOP,

"Let me thank you once more for your visit. You come to my solitude like a being from another world. Let me say once for all that I love you as much as I honour you, and therefore your visits either in Scotland or here are doubly welcome.

"Yours very sincerely,
"AR."

There has been no attempt to collect for this book the reminiscences or the formal appreciations of the few survivors from Rosebery's active days. It would have been agreeable to revive memories of some of those symposia in which he delighted. His fidelity to Loder's Club of Christ Church days has been described. Political affinities gave birth to the "Articles," inspired originally by Arthur Acland as a dining-club of carefully chosen Liberals. The members entertained the club in turn, Rosebery himself, Herbert Gardner,¹ and Carrington being frequent

¹ (1846-1921.) M.P. 1885-95. President of Board of Agriculture 1892-5. Cr. Lord Burghclere 1895.

hosts, Haldane and Asquith active members. To the champagne that sparkled in the glasses was added the conversational champagne of Frank Lockwood and Birrell, for whose contributions to the gaiety of evenings Rosebery was duly grateful. He was also the founder of a cheerful Scottish institution, the Loco Club, which held its amusing gatherings at the New Club, Edinburgh.

His serious reading has been touched on in the course of the narrative ; but he had strong likes and dislikes on the lighter side. Mr. Edward Cooper's racing stories seemed to him to be the best of their kind, but he did not care much for sensational fiction. Good comedy always appealed to him. He read *Happy Thoughts* aloud to his children, and the *Diary of a Nobody* was his favourite bedside companion.

His life, however, has to tell its own story. Still, in another vein, I am allowed to quote from some sheets of notes left by Mrs. Drew, who, as Mary Gladstone, had more chances than most of seeing him without his mask of reticence and reserve. Their friendly relations, diversified by some sparring, lasted after the death of Mrs. Drew's parents and her own widowhood. They often met, and the charities in which Mrs. Drew was interested profited by their meetings. In her note she says :

“ Very few people have had the nous, or had the privilege of seeing the heart of gold that is in him. It is a curiously cold, impassive face, but surely his smile is the most irradiating that has ever been seen. He is absolutely transformed by it. It reminded me of the scene from the Righi—the cold snow-clad mountains lying like death upon the horizon, and suddenly in one flush they become alive, glorious, radiant, the most wonderful transformation scene in the world. . . . He has a remarkable capacity for entering into the feelings of others, especially those who are poor or unhappy, and he has an extraordinary aptitude for getting his neighbours out of a tight place. At a tenants' dinner an old farmer, not wishing his host to be shown up, turned to Lord Rosebery and whispered to him, ‘ There is something gone wrong with the

pudding, my Lord, it has got frozen by mistake.' Lord Rosebery beckoned to a footman, and after a colloquy with him, he turned to his guest : ' Oh, I find it is all right ; it is a new kind of pudding, and it is frozen on purpose.' "

Mrs. Drew goes on to compare the understanding and regard which united the household at Dalmeny, owner and servants, with the attitude of those who looked on their household simply as part of the machinery of life. This showed her quick perception, for this human interest in his surroundings was a marked feature in Rosebery's character. It was notable in friendships which he established in the racing world.¹ Matthew Dawson was an exceptional character, a man who would have made his mark anywhere, and a most interesting companion. But Rosebery was prodigal with help and advice to weaker figures in that exciting arena. Two jockeys who rode for him, at a long interval of time, Harry Constable and Danny Maher, were his particular care. Both were exceptional horsemen ; both were happily married ; both broke down physically ; and one of them dissipated health and fortune by wild extravagance. Rosebery lavished time and trouble on both invalids and their families, in a way that more ostentatious philanthropists might envy.

When all is said and done, Rosebery remains something of an enigma to those who knew him best. Sometimes a character may be illustrated on the negative side : what a man dislikes or ignores may be as focal as the list of his tastes and pursuits. There were some notable gaps in Rosebery's well-furnished intellect. Like many men of letters, perhaps like most, he was without any mathematical faculty ; but in addition he never at any age made a study of philosophy, or of any branch of science. It is strangest, perhaps, that, with his devotion to an open-air

¹ Mr. John Corbett was a frequent correspondent, and on one occasion he and his merry Comus band of the *Sporting Times* lunched together at the Durdans.

life, zoology, botany, and geology remained sealed books to him. The love of nature which was so strong in him was that of an artist or a bookman, rather than that of a Gilbert White or a Hugh Miller. But few men spent more hours in the open air, when he was not enslaved by office. His long walks have been mentioned, but he loved dining out of doors, even when the days were growing shorter, and when the chillier guests begged for rugs over their knees. His after-dinner drives remain in the memory of those who shared them; he never talked better than then, or more openly. It is a hopeless task to fix in cold print any impression of his personal charm. "You have not been under the wand of the magician," said Pitt to somebody who had not heard his great rival speak; and so it must be for those who did not know Rosebery. Though the Fairy Queens beside his cradle, unlike those in Macaulay's poem of which he was so fond, lavished many various gifts upon him, it would be untrue to call it a very happy life. But he warmed both hands before its fire, and he did not fear death. *Ave atque vale.*

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CHAPTER XXI

THE TURF: LATER YEARS

SOME of the Mentmore yearlings were once more trained in 1890. The colts were sold, amongst them *Bonavista* by *Bend Or—Vista*, who had already produced two fillies of no racing merit. *Bonavista* won the Two Thousand and other races for Sir Charles Rose before being exported, leaving behind him *Cyllene*, the most successful transmitter of the *Stockwell* line. The Duke of Westminster, than whom there was no sounder judge of bloodstock, had always tried to buy *Vista*, her owner told me. He realised the value of a *Doncaster—Macaroni* cross. Two two-year-old fillies won in 1890, *Corstorphine*, a daughter of *Foxhall*, whom Rosebery bought as a stallion, and *Keroual* by *Foxhall—Kermesse*.

Next year *Corstorphine* ran second for the Oaks.

Eighteen ninety-two was a lean year. *Accumulator*, by *Dutch Skater—Illuminata*, ran five times without winning. *Amaze* won one race. Meanwhile the discarded *Bonavista* carried off the Two Thousand.

But in the following year the sun shone. The two-year-old *Ladas*, by *Hampton—Illuminata*, ran four times, winning the Woodcote, Coventry, and Champagne Stakes and the Middle Park Plate. Gamblers shook their heads at the audacious naming of this beautiful brown colt, who recalled to old race-goers the perfect shape of his grandsire *Rosicrucian*. Years afterwards Rosebery wrote to Mr. Somerville Tattersall, with whom he carried on an hereditary friendship:

"I agree with you that the bravest thing ever done was to name the horse *Ladas*, and I thought so at the time. . . ."

The filly *Tressure*, by *Bend Or*—*Bonnie Jean*, ran third for the One Thousand.

Eighteen ninety-four blazed more brilliantly still. *Ladas* ran away with the Two Thousand, the Newmarket Stakes, and the Derby. Nobody had seen a Prime Minister leading in a winner at Epsom. Later in the year a cloud came over the sun. The colt was third in the Princess of Wales Stakes, second in the Eclipse Stakes and in the St. Leger. He was unlucky, but had trained off somewhat. *Sir Visto*, two-year-old by *Barcaldine*—*Vista*, made some amends in October by winning the Imperial Produce Stakes at Kempton. *Sir Visto*, a far less attractive colt than *Ladas*, after being twice beaten at Newmarket, duly won the Derby of 1895, and surpassed his stable companion by carrying off the St. Leger as well. His half-brother by *Donovan*, *Velasquez*, made his debut in the following season and showed marvellous promise, winning four of the principal two-year-old races, at Ascot, Newmarket, Goodwood, and Doncaster. Rosebery believed him to be the best colt he ever bred or owned. He was somewhat amiss in the autumn, and as a three-year-old in 1897, and as a four-year-old, did not show the same astonishing form, running second to formidable rivals in *Galtee More*, *Persimmon*, *Love Wisely*, and *Cyllene*, all first-class animals. However, a winner of the Princess of Wales Stakes, the Eclipse Stakes, of the Champion Stakes twice, and a total of over £26,000 in stakes, cannot be called a failure, though he was certainly a disappointment.

Illuminata had bred very regularly, producing in 1892 *Gas*, who did not win though very speedy, and in 1894 *Chelandry* by *Goldfinch*, who added to the gains of 1896 by carrying off four races, including the National Breeders' Produce Stakes at Sandown and the Imperial Produce Stakes at Kempton. In 1897 she compensated for the Classic failures of *Velasquez* by taking the One Thousand. Another *Illuminata* filly, *Corposant*, ran third for the Oaks of 1899.

There was a momentary lull in Rosebery's racing. *Gas* went early to the stud and her second foal was *Valve* (1901). She was leased for her racing career, and won several times as a two-year-old. She became a valuable addition to the Mentmore paddocks. The next year *Cicero*, by *Cyllene*, was foaled. He was a rather small yearling, chestnut, with the exquisite quality of his sire, recalling their Arab ancestry. He won the Coventry Stakes and the National Breeders' Produce Stakes in 1904. In that year a formidable French contingent was in evidence, offspring of *Flying Fox*, who had been bought by Monsieur Edmond Blanc. *Jardy* was a colt of very high class, and won the Middle Park Plate; but he was amiss the next year, and *Cicero*, who had given his trainer some anxiety, beat him for the Derby of 1905. *Cicero* was defeated for the Eclipse Stakes by another of Monsieur Blanc's colts, *Val d'Or*. Meanwhile *Chelandry* was taking the place of her dam and of *Vista* as a breeder of winners. Between 1900 and 1907 she produced six, including *Chelys*, by *Sir Visto*; *Traquair*, by *Ayrshire*, who carried on the National Breeders' Produce Stakes tradition in 1906; *Popinjay*, by *St. Frusquin*; and in 1907 *Neil Gow*, by *Marco*. This last also won the great two-year-old race at Sandown, beat *Lemberg* by a short head in the Two Thousand, was fourth in the Derby of 1910, and ran a dead heat with *Lemberg* in the Eclipse Stakes. He broke down before the St. Leger.

The older generation of present race-goers will recall the later successes of the Mentmore stud, Percy Peck and George Blackwell sharing the trainers' duties. *Prue* once more won for him the National Breeders' Produce Stakes in 1912, and the Coronation Stakes the next year. *Vaocluse*, a daughter of *Valve*, took the One Thousand in 1915. *Prue* is from *Prune*, by *Persimmon—Tressure*, and so goes back to *Bonnie Jean*. In 1924 *Plack*¹ seemed likely to satisfy Rose-

¹ By *Hurry On—Groat*, won the One Thousand, and many other races.



LORD ROSEBERY AND HIS SONS, ASCOT, 1910.

bery's ambition of winning the Gold Cup at Ascot, one of the few great races that evaded him.

One singular fact remains to be noted. None of the four remarkable colts that Rosebery owned, *Ladas*, *Sir Visto*, *Velasquez*, and *Cicero*, achieved much success as a sire of winners. The last did most, but he was never in the first rank of stallions. The highly descended brood mares, on the other hand, have gone on producing generations of good horses.

APPENDIX I

TWO VISITS TO PRINCE BISMARCK

September 27th, 1890.—"H. Bismarck and I, after having passed two nights at Ostend and one at Berlin, arrived at Hammermühle, the station for Varzin, at 5.30 to-day (Saturday). The old Prince was at the station on horseback waiting for us, and greeted us warmly, thanking me for coming into so remote a province to see him. He then sent his horses away and got into a victoria with me.

"He talked about his trees as we drove along. I incidentally alluded to H. B.'s settling at Schönhausen. The Prince said he was glad of it, but feared the solitude would be too much for him. I replied that I thought he liked solitude, that this year he had spent a solitary two months at Königstein and Ostend. 'Ah, he liked solitude this year because he is very much out of temper. He took my removal much more to heart than I did. I was glad that an opportunity was offered me of getting out before I died. I feared I was condemned to servitude for life.' 'So did all the world,' said I.

"We drove through a great farm. All the farms here seem enormous owing to the severity of the winter which requires that everything shall be housed, and then we drove up to a three-sided quadrangle consisting of a plain country-house centre with two long low wings of a farm-house character. There is besides a new wing, very comfortable but of a villa character externally and quite uncongenial to the rest of the house. This the Prince wished to continue but fortunately found it too expensive. . . .

"The Prince at once took me to my rooms, a vast bedroom and a vast sitting-room, the latter filled with presentation books, some English, notably some crazy books by Mrs. Bernal Osborne and a volume of the immortal speeches of Sir H. Parkes. . . .

"After dinner, on returning to the drawing-room, where he has his four pipes on a sofa, he showed me a cuckoo clock which he had procured for his room at Berlin, hoping that the loudness with which it proclaimed the hour would be a hint

to ambassadors not to prolong their stay ; but unfortunately they only saw in it a topic for further conversation. . . .”

September 28th, 1890.—“ H. B. came to fetch me at 10.30 to walk with his father, whom he had left discussing a pint of hock. We three took a pleasant walk through the beeches. . . . He spoke of the young Emperor, said that he was full of vanity, that he lives only for applause, that he does not work, he does not even read what he ought. He is very extravagant, is making debts, and his butcher's bills are not paid.

“ ‘ You are overthrown, Prince,’ I said, ‘ with the power you created—hoist with your own petard as Shakespeare says.’

“ ‘ Quite true. In 1862 my old Emperor met me with his abdication ready written in his hand. But he was willing to fight and he fought.’ . . .

“ He spoke much of his own fall. The principal passion among Germans, he said, was envy. In England happily patriotism comes before party, but not in Germany. . . .

“ After luncheon we drove for 3 or 4 hours in a victoria across the country and through the woods in break-neck fashion.

“ ‘ The intrigues began by ministers wanting my place and even more by their wives wanting my precedence ; and then the Grand Duke of Baden took an active part, for he had been offended by my refusing him some audience. The young Emperor went on so that I at last asked outright, “ Does Your Majesty wish to get rid of me ? ” No answer. “ In that case it is easily done. I can resign my Prime Ministership of Prussia and retain the Chancellorship.” The Emperor eagerly embraced this proposal, but said, “ You will support the army proposals.” I said, “ Yes, but if I support the whole proposal it must be as Prime Minister.” And so it was settled that the resignation of the Prime Ministership should take place in June. But then came the Socialist question. I said that if I remained I must fight. He agreed entirely for three weeks. Then supervened the Grand Duke of Baden and turned him round like paper. I drafted the rescript according to the Emperor's orders, but said to him, “ I strongly advise Your Majesty to throw this into the fire.” However, he seized it and signed it in a great hurry. Then I kept it back for some days, still hoping that he might change his mind ; but at dinner at my house he asked for it, and

desired it to be promulgated. Had he said to me, "I wish to govern alone," nothing would have been easier; but he tried to get rid of me by ill-treatment. He did business in a way which hurt my dignity, saying his nerves would stand it better than mine. When I saw that the Emperor wished to get rid of me I thought deeply as to whether I should be justified in making such a "hole" as I should cause after being for 28 years in affairs.

"The old Emperor was good-tempered. The Emperor Frederick was polite; this young man is neither good-tempered nor polite. I always got on very well with Empress Frederick: it is a mistake to think otherwise; though I opposed her in the Battenberg affair. When Miss Dörnberg returned after a year in Japan the Empress said to her, "You have heard of the terrible upset in our lives," meaning my dismissal.

"I do not know on what terms I am with the young Emperor. Since my dismissal the only communication I have received from him is a copy of a letter he wrote to Schweringer to take care of my health. As he had done this for some years without the imperial orders, Schweringer was inclined not to answer it; but I urged him to do so, and he sent a somewhat ironical reply."

"P. Bismarck thinks that Trochu was a traitor to the Empress. But that if the Empress had shown more courage and shown herself to the army and in Paris he thinks she might have maintained herself. He thinks that the Empire might have continued had it not gone to war in 1870; though the Emperor was of a contrary opinion. 'I had a curious interview of two hours with the Emperor Napoleon in 1867. He wished to ask me my opinion as to the expediency of giving France liberal institutions. I said that as long as he kept the *gardes du corps*—as long as he had 50,000 picked men in Paris on whom he could rely, he could afford himself the luxury of liberal institutions: I even advised some concessions. But he distrusted the disinterestedness of my advice; whereas I was quite loyal in the matter.

"It was subject of consideration with me whether we should not restore the Empire and negotiate with it, giving it 100,000 picked men from the 3 or 400,000 prisoners we had in Germany. It would have suited us, for it would have been a very weak government, restored by the foreigner and minus two provinces. I told Thiers that we might do this. "You would not commit such a crime," cried the little

man. I replied that we should act just as suited our interests.'

"He talks a great deal of his trees and estate as we drive along. He has some 20,000 acres half wood, half arable. He has no tenants—all is in his own hand—with a very capable manager. He has also built three large mills for making paper out of wood. To-day we drove to a harvest home on one of his farms, but being rainy we did not get out. A woman presented flowers on a plate, reciting some German verses, and the Prince thanked her; then the dancers came out of the barn headed by a band of music and gave hearty cheers for the Prince and his family. 'The only good I have done in my life of which I do not regret is my wells. I have six wells for villages here at a cost of £100 apiece.'

"'Are not people in Germany as afraid of buying estates as they are in England?'

"'Yes, and if I had foreseen ten years ago what would happen I would not have bought either: I would rather have sold.'

"'I suppose every year that rolls over the Balkan peninsula strengthens these little states against Russia?'

"'Yes, and time is on the side of Austria.'

"'In one sense,' I replied, 'but not in another, if in that time Austria goes to pieces.'

"'Yes, it is extraordinary—the Austrian Empire has lasted four centuries, with nothing to hold it together but the memory of four centuries of misgovernment.'"

September 29th, 1890.—"Lotar Bucher writes shorthand, and sits in the morning pencil and paper in hand looking in mute appeal to the Prince to dictate something; but he won't. The Prince's memory is by no means so good as it was, H. B. tells me: H. B.'s own is excellent.

"Talking of *cabinets noirs* at luncheon Prince B. mentioned that the Emperor Alexander told him in Russia that the German princes had been so hostile to Russia during the Crimean war. 'They wrote to friends in Russia "horrible things by the post—so of course one saw them."'

"While on our long drive in the afternoon we talked much about his memoirs, which he *will* not write. 'I do not care to dictate my memoirs because I am too lazy. The only consolation of my present position is that I have nothing to do. Formerly, when I woke I had to think of all I had to do.

Now I have only to wind up my watch or take a walk. Moreover if I write memoirs I must either tell lies or reveal the character of my old master in all its nakedness. For he was always wrong. He was always being worked upon by his wife the Empress Augusta, the granddaughter of the Emperor Paul, a wild character constantly conspiring. At last I knew so many of her conspiracies that that kept her quiet. For instance in 1848 she had a conspiracy to set her husband on one side (on his accession to the throne I suppose) and make herself regent. He sometimes said to me, "I know I am henpecked."

"He was always wrong. In 1868 he wanted to go to Frankfort and humiliate us before Austria. In 1864 he wanted more Danish territory, when I thought we had already too much, and would not speak to me for three days when I refused to agree with him. Then again, he was in favour of Augustenburg's claims, and wanted another Grand Duke to vote against us at Frankfort. In 1866 he did not want to go to war with Austria, but I told him it was absolutely necessary: it was like two bulls in a herd of cows, they must fight in order to decide who is to be possessor. Then when he did fight he wanted to march on. He wished to advance into Hungary with no provisions or water, with cholera and other diseases among our troops with 200,000 of the former Confederation army ready to fall on us—105,000 Bavarians alone—and the French Emperor with 60 or 100,000. It would have been madness. I said to him that it might be advisable if he wished to reconstitute the Eastern Empire at Constantinople, but not otherwise! He appealed to the Crown Prince who sided with me. So he wrote on the foot of my report, "Deserted by my minister in the face of the enemy and unable under the circumstances to obtain another I appeal to my son to help me, and as he also turns against me, I must submit." This is among my family papers.

"Again in 1870 he resisted violently becoming Emperor. That was dynastic pride. He wanted all Germany to bow before the King of Prussia. He said he would not accept the position of "honorary major." I explained that the German princes would not allow the necessary power to one who was not Emperor—they would only consider him their equal. There the Crown Prince did not help me. He sat agitated and silent, not daring to look his father in the face. When at last he gave way he would be Emperor of Germany and

nothing else : a title to which the Princes would not submit. At last, on the day of the proclamation of the Empire he was so angry with me that he walked off the dais and greeted Moltke and the others, treating me as if I did not exist, as if I was air.

“ ‘Nor did the Crown Prince help me when in 1866 the King wanted to put down the Parliament and proclaim a new constitution. In vain I pointed out that after all it was not a difficult parliament, that I had carried on government with a party of 11 out of 500 members, that it would never do to show ourselves before Germany as less liberal than the other States, &c. The Crown Prince sate during the long discussion in the railway carriage from Prague, hot and red, but saying nothing.

“ ‘The reasons I give for not writing memoirs may be mere excuses for my laziness ; but for one thing, I could not write my views of the last three years without writing a book which would not be allowed to be published in Prussia, for it would be high treason.’

“ ‘Prince B. told me a little later the story of how he persuaded the King to ride off the field of Sadowa. ‘The King went slowly and reluctantly’ (after the well-known conversation), ‘so I took my foot out of the stirrup and gave the King’s horse a good kick with my toe in the flank—and off he went at a gallop. The King looked round and asked, “What is that ?” I replied that his horse had probably been frightened by the firing. I don’t know if he believed me or not, but he said nothing.’ (This incident seems to me a good parable of their relations.)

“ ‘The relation between King and vassal implies mutual confidence. That existed between me and the old King, and I had a warm affection for him. But not between this young King and me.’ I reminded him that in 1887 Prince Wilhelm had seemed his pupil, his disciple. ‘Yes, too much so :

Souvent Prince varie,
Follet (sic) qui s’y fie.

In our last week he hurt my dignity.’

“I told him what I knew he was aware of—the Kaiser’s supposed fear of his inkstand. ‘Yes, that was one of the lies told. I said nothing but what was respectful—my eyes may have spoken, but I cannot control them so well. But I am accustomed to be treated like a gentleman—to live in better company. The young Emperor said, “I hear Bleich-

röder has brought Windhorst here—so it seems you are living with Jews and Jesuits.” I said that it was necessary for my business—that was a matter for myself. “No,” he said, “you should not have seen them without informing (or consulting) me.” I replied that I could not allow anyone to interfere with my household arrangements or as to the people I chose to receive at my house.

“At our last interview the Emperor kissed me on both cheeks, and said that he was only parting with me out of regard for my health. “But,” I said, “I have not enjoyed such good health for years past as now—apart from the worry of the last few weeks.”

“Instead of ministers advising the Sovereign, you now have a Sovereign advising the ministers. Caprivi is determined to have no will of his own. Marschall thinks he is clever, which he is not. The Emperor has most experience of foreign affairs of the three—which does not prevent his being very foolish.”

“At this juncture Prince B. summoned a woman whom he saw, one of his tenants, to ask her about the potato harvest. She told a long story complaining of the depredations of the wild boars among her potatoes. His demeanour with the peasantry is very genial.

“The Emperor’s jealousy is most extraordinary. He cannot bear this subscription for a monument to me. In order to hinder it as much as he could he took the presidency : then he tried to prevent officers in the army subscribing and failed ; then he declared that anything over 500,000 marks should not go to the monument—which he had no earthly right to do—and now it is between 7 and 800,000 marks and not yet closed. He reminds me of a landlord who cannot bear rich peasants. He cannot bear anyone to be distinguished but himself. The old King understood our positions. He was never jealous, he knew there could be no jealousy between us. He knew I was his servant and was glad I was a strong one.

“I see the Emperor is reported to have said to Count Moltke the other day that he was sorry he could not pay a similar visit at Friedrichsrüh. But how is he so sure that he would be welcome at Friedrichsrüh ? I do not wish to see him there, because I cannot lie or dissemble ; I cannot pretend to approve his conduct, so his visit would only be an embarrassment to me.”

“He talks much in these drives of his trees, which are a

passion with him. He told me that jays are constantly employed burying acorns, as dogs bury bones, with the object of retrieving and eating them (in winter). The consequence is that they are invaluable planters of oaks.

"After leaving office this year I was at a loss for something to do, so I took to reading the classics again, Shakespeare and Schiller, which I had not read for years, with the greatest enjoyment.

"William I did not so much oppose universal suffrage. I did not foresee in establishing it that the particularism of the different Sovereigns would be so little powerful. Universal suffrage loses half its danger, if it is exercised openly and not by ballot.' . . .

"After luncheon to-day he said as he rose, 'How I should like to get drunk to-day. Not for years have I felt that wish so strongly as during the last few days.' (Does my society depress him?)—all this in high good humour. I said, 'They tell of many of your drinking exploits—there was one of your drinking off a bottle of champagne at a draught and frightening the King.'

"Ah, that was with King Frederick Wilhelm IV at Lessling (?). There was a great stag's horn that held a bottle—one had to drink between two tines of the antlers—and if one tipped it too much the wine came with a rush all over one. I said, "We will see what diplomacy can do," and drank it off without spilling a drop. I then said to the servant who came to take it, "Fill that again." "No, no," said the King in alarm, "Bismarck, that is enough." There was skill as well as power in my drinking. Poor Frederick Wilhelm IV, so often represented with a bottle of Clicquot, was never drunk in his life.'

"He dilated at length on the dynasties holding Germany together, even the bad ones. 'The German always likes to draw closer the connection of their own community. They would like their own government in every village. After all that has been done in Hanover, and after 24 years half the nation remains devoted to the old dynasty.'

"In the victoria he said: 'James Rothschild died worth 1,700 millions of francs. The old King would not allow us to shoot anything at Ferrières. "There must be nothing taken," he said, "in a house I inhabit." But I got hold of the butler, who was giving us wretched wine, and asked if he had ever been put on a pallet and flogged with a stirrup leather? After that we got good wine. We only shot one

day when the King was away, and they gave us bad cartridges.'

"Passing a prosperous village of peasant freeholders he talked about the Stein legislation. 'It had not helped to unite the nation for the war of independence. On the contrary both parties were dissatisfied with it. So late as 1840, when I was a sort of magistrate, a peasant before me, referring to the year of Stein's legislation, said, "That was the year in which half our property was given to the landlords!" It was very unfair, but on the whole I approve of it, as it weakened many small freeholders.'

"Talking as usual about trees I asked him if he cut down trees himself 'like Mr. Gladstone'? He replied with a laugh, 'No—what I envy Mr. Gladstone for is his eloquence—he can speak for ever about nothing. I can only speak when I have something to say, and, as for eloquence, I am only eloquent when I am attacked—when I am in a passion.'

"Busch used to sit at table with a notebook in his lap and take notes. But he was a long way off me at table and made many mistakes.' . . ."

October 1st, 1890.—"At luncheon Prince B. talked with great pleasure of Walter Scott's novels, and of Dugald Dalgetty, Caleb Balderston, Meg Merrilies, &c. As a young man, when he had lived much alone, one of the few English books he had was *The Bride of Lammermoor*, 'which I read often and even studied.'

"I have forgotten all my Russian. I learned it when I was 44; and one remembers what one learns according to the time at which one learns it, and all that one learns in childhood. I used to talk for hours to the Russian peasants who drove me about their condition. . . .

"The Prince of Hohenzollern's estate had been offered to him for a million of thalers, but the cost was too great, as it was, he said, about the sums he had spent on the agricultural estate near Friedrichsrüh. The present owner is the candidate for the Spanish throne of 1870. I quoted Plon-Plon's wise remark on that candidature: that it was not worth while to go to war to get rid of the Prince of Hohenzollern, as the Spaniards would soon do it of their own accord. Prince B. agreed. He said: 'I remember the evening of Sedan when I was riding back with some princes and they were talking about the war. I said that I thought the Prince would have made a very good neighbour for France, that he

was closely related to the Bonapartes, and I always took it for granted that he would go to Paris on his way to Spain and come to an understanding with the Emperor. A voice behind exclaimed, "Not a bit of it!" I turned round and saw the Prince himself!

"I said, 'The sun shines on the Socialists to-day,' as it is the day on which the anti-Socialist law expires. 'Yes, it is a serious day, one cannot meet them with smiles.' I spoke of the internal differences which divided them, but he said that in Germany they had hitherto kept well together.

"'But you have done a little socialism.' 'No, I do not acknowledge that—what I did I did for the relief of the poor, not to secure their domination.'

"The State Insurance scheme, he told me, was not yet in operation and many wish to drop it.

"His favourite charger he had for 19 years. He rode her once for 18 hours without food or water. On her return she pricked her ears on getting into the stable, buried her nose in the manger and fed heartily. I told him of Copenhagen giving a kick after Waterloo day.

"His agent has told him that the peasantry around are full of vague hopes excited by the Emperor; while many wish to emigrate, which Prince B. has always considered a sign of prosperity in Germany.

"Prince B. well satisfied with his interview with the Queen. She pressed him strongly to promise her that there should be no regency during the life of the Emperor Frederick—a pledge he had no difficulty in giving. She speaks German absolutely like a native—much better than her daughter, Empress Frederick."

On October 16th, 1897, Rosebery started for Schönhofen, the old home of the Bismarck family, for the christening of Herbert Bismarck's eldest son,¹ of whom he was one of the godfathers. It was an interesting old place, with many family traditions. On the day after the friendly ceremony Herbert Bismarck and he set out for Friedrichsrüh, on a visit to the old Prince. He met Rosebery at the door, and expressed great pleasure at seeing him again.

"The Prince ate and drank much less than he did when I saw him last—perhaps two glasses of wine, and after

¹ Otto, 3rd Prince von Bismarck, born September 27th, 1897, succeeded his father 1904.

dinner nothing but a glass of water instead of the old tankard of beer. He also only smoked one pipe after dinner, though two were put out for him. I never saw him look better, though he is a little thinner, and is a trifle deaf. But he declines to take exercise, which annoys Schweringer, who says that if he would take ordinary precautions he might live to an unlimited age, as all his organs are perfectly sound. He told us an anecdote of when he went with his King, in 1873 he thought, to Petersburg, and the King asked him to find out what present he could make to Gortchakoff, as he had already given him his portrait and his highest order in diamonds. Should he give a snuff-box? Bismarck repudiated the suggestion, but when he went to sound Gortchakoff, the old fellow promptly replied, 'A good solid gold box with diamonds,'—an answer which Prince Bismarck said he was ashamed to take to his own master. But it would be impossible to repeat or remember all his conversation, which was as witty and ready as ever. He talked from seven till past eleven thus, his present hour for retiring to bed—a circumstance which is very rare with him, for he usually utters but few words and buries himself in his newspaper. At only rare moments in the evening did his brow cloud for a moment, and that was when he was brought back to the contemplation of the present, by being shown some telegram about current politics in the evening newspaper. . . . When he sat down to dinner he turned to me and said, 'Among the many friends who have deserted me since I left office, the one I regret most is my old friend and companion my stomach, which is by no means so true to me as he was.' This led me to speak of someone who sat through long dinners without eating a morsel, and I asked him if that was not the case with Victor Emmanuel. He replied that it was, and that he well remembered watching him at dinner presiding in this fasting fashion, but at midnight he would become clamorous for an enormous meal. . . .

"He talked of having been in Glasgow, and of having gone thence to a place which was pronounced 'Curcoobree' and spelled Kirkcudbright, and which he pronounced and spelled quite correctly, for the purpose he thought of visiting the scene of one of Scott's novels. . . .

"He talked about the Hohenzollern candidature for the throne of Spain. Prince Hohenzollern, the former candidate, had been writing to the papers to say that his candidature was entirely Bismarck's affair and plan. 'For the sake of my

game,' said the Prince, 'I do not care to contradict him; for we have eight miles of frontier together at Varzin, and he could therefore be a disagreeable neighbour. But, as a matter of fact, it was his father who pushed the affair. He was devoured with the idea, after his son had become Prince of Roumania, that he was destined to have two sons, one King of Spain, and the other Emperor of Constantinople.' He, Prince Bismarck, had thought that the Prince, as a descendant of Murat, would have been rather agreeable to the French than otherwise, that he would pass through Paris to Madrid, and would then arrange things with the Emperor. He never thought that a German King in Spain would be of any use to Prussia, and did not dream that it would cause much offence to France. . . .

"I asked him if Thiers was clever. He said very clever and very business-like, and repeated what he had once told me before, about his speaking German to them, and Favre going off into theatrical despair, while little Thiers went and wrote on a piece of paper in the corner, and handed it to him saying, '*Est-ce que cela fait votre affaire?*' and it was quite satisfactory.

"But Thiers, however, made one great mistake. He was filled with the Napoleonic ideas of making war, and asked Bismarck not to fix the ransom of Paris at too high a figure. Bismarck had never had the slightest idea of asking any ransom for Paris, as he considered that included in the indemnity. He at once asked for (I think) a milliard, and Thiers was delighted when he had beaten him down to two hundred millions. This money the old King sorely wanted to take for his army, whether as a military fund, or for distribution, I did not clearly understand. Bismarck told him to take it if he chose, and no one would say anything—certainly he would not. But the King wanted Bismarck's signature, and that, Bismarck said, was impossible. For the moment *he* took it, he should have to account for it, and then it would no longer be available for the King's purposes. There was a long struggle of this kind, and eventually the King did not dare take it, and so lost it.

"I was always under the impression that the choice before the French was either to give up Belfort, or to receive the Prussian troops in Paris. But to-night it appeared that it was a choice between taking Belfort or Metz, but Belfort would have required ten thousand men to hold it, and Thiers got it back by representing that he could not get the

Treaty through the Assembly without it. As it was, the Treaty was signed much more promptly than Bismarck expected (at least, so I understood), which was managed by special trains to Bordeaux. At this stage he spoke of his great anxiety to conclude peace promptly, being in hourly dread of the intervention of some third power—England, or Russia.

“At the beginning of the Campaign some Italian revolutionaries waited upon him to offer, if he provided some money, five millions of francs I think, and some arms, to dethrone the King if he took arms for France. Crispi was among them, or at least his representative. However, the matter fell through, as the Italians remained quiescent.

“Presently Bismarck remarked to me, ‘There is one calamity which Providence has spared me, that of being King of Italy.’ I told him that even that would be preferable to being King of Greece, which he admitted.

“I recommended him to read Le Brun’s *Memoirs*, giving an account of Le Brun’s negotiations with the Archduke Albert before the war. As to that, he said he had heard, or he believed, that the Russians had threatened to march three hundred thousand men into Austria, if she moved. And so heartily was the Emperor of Russia with the Germans that, on receiving the telegram announcing the first German victory, he had shouted out with regard to the King—‘After all, he is a fine old fellow,’ and drinking his health had thrown the glass over his shoulder to break it against the wall.

“‘Well,’ said Prince Bismarck, ‘I am glad it is all over. I should not like to have to do it again. I feel like the man who rode through the snow, always afraid of riding into the Lake of Constance, which was on his way, and when he met a man and asked him where it was, found that he had ridden across it without knowing it, in the snow, and was so struck with horror at what he had done that he fell down dead. But,’ said the Prince, ‘it was not so bad to deal with the old King. He was not always easy, but he was at any rate a gentleman, and one could trust him.’

“As to life, since the death of his wife he was weary of it. He had nothing to live for. I said he had his children. ‘No,’ he said; ‘they are all happily settled; they would shed a tear or two, and then it would be over.’ It is curious, by the by, that, within a few weeks, I should have found both Bismarck and Gladstone weary of life. . . .

“All this time we had been seated in a sort of circle round

the Prince. The conversation was entirely confined to him and to me, unless Herbert interposed to assist in a reminiscence. At last they told him that it was half-past eleven o'clock, which was his bed-time, and he took leave of us. The evening had been a great treat, because he seldom speaks a word at night, but buries himself in his newspapers. They deceived him purposely as to the time at which I was leaving, so that he should not get up to see me off."

APPENDIX II

A JUBILEE HYMN

King of Kings and Lord of Lords,
Hear a kneeling nation's prayers ;
For this happy day affords
Gratitude for sixty years.
Hear our voice of thankfulness
Rising to Thy face unseen ;
Bless our Sovereign Mother, bless
Thy chosen Servant, bless our Queen.

Bless her children, bless her race,
So may, when the time arrives,
Those who never saw her face
Bless her living in their lives.
Bless the memories of the dead
That o'ershade her lonely throne ;
Bless the tears that she has shed
For sorrows other than her own.

Bless her subjects, bless our land,
Church and Senate, home and mart ;
Bind her people hand to hand,
Close and closer, heart to heart.
Bless her empire, where 'tis written
Land with sea for once agrees,
Lands of Britain, seas of Britain,
British lands athwart the seas.

King of Kings and Lord of Lords,
Hush the angry nations' rage,
Still the clamour, sheathe the swords,
And the wrath of man assuage.
Let the archangels of peace
Compass us with guardian wings,
Unity and faith increase,
Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

And when to the trumpet's peal,
At Thy seat of judgment dread,
Sovereigns and subjects kneel,
Pale battalions of the dead,
Lord, have mercy, purge our taint,
Sin and wrath, in love divine :
Kingdoms here are shadows faint ;
May we reign with Thee in Thine.

II

Lord, our only help and stay,
Through this life to that unseen,
Suppliant we bring our thanks,
Lord, we bless Thee for our Queen.
Cherish and prolong her years,
Guide her with Thy sovereign grace,
Grant she may, when Thou shalt call,
See Thy glory, face to face.

Frankincense let others bring,
Wealth of spikenard, stores of myrrh ;
Our oblation is a Life,
Many a long and toilsome year.
Fourscore years of light and cloud,
Carked with care but pure of stain,
Scarred with sorrow, bright with faith,
Lord, we bring Victoria's reign.

Glories gild our Empire here,
Spacious rule on earth and sea,
Glories dim, and futile rule,
If not consecrate to Thee.
Rushlights in Thy shadeless sun,
Transient our splendour vain.
Power and wisdom only rest
With the Lamb for mortals slain.

Living streams of crystal pure,
From Thy throne, O Lord, proceed ;
Let them cleanse our life below,
Sanctify each word and deed.
Cast we down our crowns of gold,
Seek we crowns of thorns like thine ;
Let us lose this world for Thee,
Mortal glories for divine.

Yet, O Lord, we fain would ask
Blessings for one earthly crown ;
Grant that it may represent
Living faith and pure renown.
Bless the Queen and bless the realm ;
So may Queen and Kingdom own
Duty gives the crown on earth,
Glory is with God alone.

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